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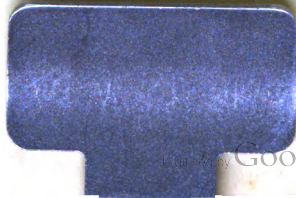
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SHORT SERMONS,

FOR

FAMILIES AND DESTITUTE PARISHES.

BY

JOHN N. NORTON, A.M.

RECTOR OF ASCENSION CHURCH, FRANKFORT, KY.; AUTHOR OF "THE BOY WHO WAS
TRAINED UP TO BE A CLERGYMAN," "ROCKFORD PARISH,"
"LIFE OF BISHOP SEABURY," ETC.



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TO THE
PARISHIONERS OF ASCENSION CHURCH,
FRANKFORT, KY.

DEAR BRETHREN :

Having labored now, for eleven years and more, in this my first parish, with some evidences of success, I feel an anxious wish to leave a small volume of sermons behind me, when I die, as a legacy to your children.

They will soon discover, that although your pastor was neither a great nor learned man, he honestly strove to teach the truth—not, indeed, *with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.*

That GOD ALMIGHTY may continue to bless and keep you, is the prayer of your faithful friend,

J. N. N.

I WOULD RATHER SEND AWAY A HEARER SMITING HIS BREAST,
THAN PLEASE THE MOST LEARNED AUDIENCE WITH A FINE SERMON
AGAINST ANY VICE. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY WHO, WITHOUT ANY
GREAT LEARNING OR ELOQUENCE, YET BY THEIR COMMUNICATION IN A
HUMBLE AND LOW WAY, HAVE INSTRUCTED AND CONVERTED MORE
THAN FAMOUS PREACHERS: FOR THAT THEY PREACHED NOT THEM-
SELVES, BUT CHRIST JESUS, PLACING ALL THEIR CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Bishop Wilson, of Sodor and Man.

PREFACE.

THE Author was once applied to for a contribution to a Church periodical, but pleaded a want of time as a reason for saying No.

"Well, then," rejoined our friend, "will you not furnish us with some fine passages from your sermons?"

The answer was returned in all sincerity, "There are no fine passages in them."

And so we assure the reader now, before he turns over another leaf.

Our only aim has been to deliver our message from God, in plain and simple words, which no one can fail to understand.

The *preaching* of these sermons has been attended with some profit, we humbly trust, to the souls of men—God grant that the *reading* of them may not be altogether without effect!

"AFTER having composed and delivered a sermon, (says good Bishop Horne,) I have often thought of, and repeated, the following lines of Thomson :

'Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious man
Has done his part. Ye fost'ring breezes, blow!
Ye soft'ning dews, ye tender showers, descend!
And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,
Into the perfect year!'

"Every branch of experimental science, and every portion of the history of man, lent its aid, in turn, to illustrate the sacred subject which he displayed. It was often surprising how appropriate, facts familiar to the minds of many of his hearers, and even the most apparently trifling occurrences of the passing day, became in his hands, for the exemplification of the truths to which he brought them."

Dr. Tyng's Life of Bedell.

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SERMON I.

CHRIST COMING AS A THIEF—AN ADVENT WARNING.

Behold, I come as a thief.—REV. xvi., *part of 15th verse.*

OUR SAVIOUR here speaks of His coming to judgment. He tells us that it will be sudden and unlooked-for. It is remarkable that such has always been the nature of Divine visitations.

How was it at the Flood? "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." St. Luke xvii. 27.

The same suddenness marked the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. "They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." St. Luke xvii. 28, 29.

Thus silent and sudden, also, was the overthrow of Sennacherib. "The angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred four-score and five thousand." Isaiah xxxvii. 36.

Thus was Belshazzar surprised in the midst of his

riotous feast; and so, we are assured, it will be at the end of the world. "Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." St. Luke xvii. 35, 36.

In the text, our Saviour describes His coming under another figure: "*Behold, I come as a THIEF!*"

St. Paul uses similar language in one of his Epistles. "The day of the Lord so cometh as *a thief in the night*. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.

And again, St. Peter declares: "The day of the Lord will come as *a thief in the night*; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." 2 Pet. iii. 10.

The point of comparison is this: Christ's coming to judgment, like the approach of a thief at night, will be at a time when there are no indications of His nearness, and no general expectation of it.

A thief not only gives no warning of his intended attack, but is careful, if possible, to avoid all ground of suspicion. This statement shows that the various attempts of the conceited and the curious, rudely to unravel prophecy, and to settle the year, or the month, or the day, when Christ will come, are worse than vain.

On the other hand, the unbroken continuance of the

present arrangement of creation, is no proof that the Scripture will not be fulfilled, which declares, that "The heavens and the earth, which are now, are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. iii. 7.

Nay, we must flatly deny the truth of God, if we harbor any doubts on the subject.

Christ *will* come to judgment. He will come *suddenly*. Though all seems stillness and silence, His army of angels, shining with the glorious panoply of Heaven, is marching toward our world.

Uncertainty belongs, as a thing of course, to this present imperfect state. It is the spur of expectation. We know that something great and terrible is sure to happen; that *our* eyes shall see, and *our* ears shall hear; that the solid earth shall quake, and be dissolved; that the broad canopy of heaven shall shrivel, and fade away, at the approach of the devouring flames.

The only question of uncertainty is, *when* all this shall be.

"Behold, I come as a thief!" Who has not felt startled and alarmed by the cry of fire at midnight? the repose and security of sleep changed, in a moment, to a sense of danger and dread!

Thus sudden, but oh, how indescribably more terrible, will be the announcement of the Saviour's appearing!

The night of His second advent will be marked by

no alarming signs. The world may seem perfectly at peace. We may imagine the scene, upon a limited scale, by calling to mind what will happen in the town where we live.

Its inhabitants—some good, some bad—will have retired to rest, with the same conviction that the end is afar off. The public mind may be in a frenzied state of excitement about some approaching election, which absorbs all other thoughts. Great improvements may be in progress, and stately buildings going up. The buzzing wheels of manufactories are giving animation to the stagnant current of business; merchants receiving their fresh importations, to satisfy the increasing demand for luxury and ornament; schools, for the training of the young, in successful operation; money-lenders hoarding up their usury, and gladdening their eyes with the sight of the growing heap of wealth; ambitious demagogues tossing upon their sleepless pillows, and planning some new scheme for reaching the proud eminence they desire. Young and giddy ones are dreaming of long and happy days; business men, with their drowsy visions of the next morning's work, waiting to be aroused by the boat-whistle, or the signal from the cars. Multitudes, with all their thoughts confined to this poor world—multitudes, who had committed themselves to sleep without asking that God's watchful care might keep them safe; ungodly children under the same roof with devout parents, or wicked, sin-hardened pa-

rents, whose conduct had long been silently reproved by the lives of conscientious sons and daughters; a gentle and devoted wife, breathing a prayer at midnight for her careless, thoughtless husband, who had come home late from some scene of dissipation and debauchery; a mother, unable to rest, by reason of anxiety for her stubborn, rebellious son.

The weary hours move on. The fleecy clouds, like a veil of finest gossamer, spread themselves over the face of the silvery moon. The stars march on silently in their appointed ways, with their stately and majestic tread. Who dreams of the fulfillment of the words, "*Behold, I come as a thief*"?

What means that dazzling brightness in the distant East? Why do moon and stars grow pale? What is that throne of light, with massive wheels of blazing fire? What that myriad of angel forms, marching forth from the four corners of the heavens, like bristling battalions, armed for avenging war, and sounding the shrill trumpet, long and loud, causing earth's deepest valleys and darkest caves to send back echoes which awake the dead?

Who is that, in human shape, with crown and sceptre, sitting upon the throne, as it rises in mid-heaven, in the sight of the universe?

It is the SON OF GOD, come to judge the quick and the dead, according to HIS own sure promise—come, suddenly and unlooked-for, "*as a thief*"!

Withdraw your eyes from that dread scene, and

mark the change in the appearance of the town which we saw so lately the picture of calm repose. Its inhabitants now are all wide awake. Who has thoughts to waste upon the election, which had seemed a matter of such engrossing interest? Those half-finished buildings, do the workmen have any care for *them*? Will the operatives from the manufactories, think you, resume their task to-day?

The merchant, though so thoroughly aroused, has not moved one step toward his well-filled store. The children at the schools have forgotten their books, and the tasks which had been learned the night before.

Has the money-lender and the speculator brought his bonds with him, as he rushes in affright along the confused and crowded streets? How many chances, in the lottery of political advancement, would that keen lawyer give for *any* hope of God's favor at this hour!

Are those young men thinking of their debaucheries and revelings now? Indeed they are; but not with the satisfaction they once did, when they felt it manly to boast of their shameful deeds.

Do the votaries of fashion care at all, in this moment of universal terror, for the flounces and furbelows which so lately seemed as dear to them as life? Will that ball dress and those bridal wreaths be worn to-morrow?

The people who had gone to bed without praying,

are they quite satisfied with themselves, now that the JUDGE is calling them to account?

That worldly-minded husband, who laughed at the idea of connecting himself with the church, when his minister spoke to him of Baptism and Confirmation, how does he like the thought of being separated forever from her who had been the light of his eyes, and the idol of his heart?

Would that headstrong, unruly son be sorry *now* if, like the mother whose words he has so much despised, he could look up to the JUDGE upon the throne as a Saviour and a Friend? Would *any* sinner be sorry if, like the righteous, he could behold the coming of the King of glory without dismay, and say, in holy transport, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him; He will come and save us"?

Oh! it is a harrowing thought, that some whom we know and love must join in the wail of terror and remorse which will go up from the unpardoned and un-sanctified, and say to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of HIM that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the LAMB!"

Blessed be God, the day of doom has not yet dawned. Blessed be His name, the kindly warning is repeated still, "*Behold, I come as a thief!*"

Our Saviour observes in one of his parables: "If the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." St. Matt. xxiv. 43.

We *know* that the judgment is not far off. And because we are not *certain* whether it will be to-morrow, or next week, or next month, is that a reason why we should be indifferent about it?

My friends, are we all trying to be ready for the second coming of our Lord?

Those who pray earnestly, and attend church regularly, and receive the Lord's Supper thankfully, and give of their means bountifully, and who keep themselves unspotted from the world, *are* making such preparation.

For such, there is nothing alarming in that declaration of the Saviour, so full of terror to the disobedient, "*Behold, I come as a thief!*"

SERMON II.

INFLUENCE AFTER DEATH.

He, being dead, yet speaketh.—HEB. xi., *part of 4th verse.*

OF others, besides righteous Abel, is this startling statement true. The graves of rich and poor utter their salutary warnings to the living.

The departed one may have been altogether unlettered and uncared for, but the green sod which covers him cannot silence the voice which speaks to some who knew him upon earth.

The eloquence of the senate and the courts may thrill, and animate, and convince; but there is an eloquence more persuasive, more powerful than these—the eloquence of the *dead*. Even the deaf must hear. Its warnings do not fall upon the ear, but spring up spontaneously in the memory and the heart.

Those who spend their days on earth usefully and well, live after death by their example. A father's worth, and a mother's care, and a neighbor's kindness, will be remembered long, and, in many cases, be imitated by those who come after. The upright live after death by their precepts. They may have been wholly disregarded by those to whom they were first

addressed; but the good seed will take root, and, sooner or later, yield fruits of increase.

On the other hand, we are told that "*the name of the wicked shall rot.*" Proverbs x. 7. Their influence may have been exceedingly great, but it shall become less and less, until it wholly dies away.

If any one desires, then, that his name shall be remembered after death with feelings of gratitude and satisfaction, let him strive to be good.

The subject will well repay us for further expansion and illustration.

I shall begin with an example close at home.

I. *A MOTHER'S influence after death.* — Volumes might be filled with testimonies to the truth of this point.

How indelibly a parent's image must have been imprinted upon Cowper's mind, when the sight of her picture drew forth those sweet and moving lines:

"My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu."

Did that mother, think you, though dead, ever cease to exert an influence upon her son?

"When I was a little child," says a second witness,

"my mother used to bid me kneel beside her, and place her hand upon my head while she prayed.

"Before I was old enough to know her worth, she died, and I was left too much to my own guidance. In the midst of temptations, whether at home or abroad, I have felt myself, again and again, irresistibly drawn back by the pressure of that same soft hand. A voice in my heart seemed to say: 'Oh, do not this wickedness, my child, nor sin against God!' I did not dare to disregard the call."

"It was a cool, autumnal evening (is the testimony of a third witness) in my sixth year. My mother sat in the corner of the fire-place at the right, and just upon her left hand I sat, on the large hearth-stone, amusing myself with some childish sport. After watching me for some time, she dropped her knitting in her lap, and remarked, in a mellow, subdued tone: 'My son, I wish I could live to see you as much engaged in serving God, as you are at your play!'

"She said not another word. But it went directly to my heart. I wiped a tear from my eye, and resumed my task. This expression of my mother's wish, recalled in after years, led me to begin the service which she so much desired. After the lapse of more than a quarter of a century; I love to think of that quiet hour. The seed then sown sprang up when my mother was at rest in the grave."

But why multiply words? Who has not heard of reprobate sons, after years of prodigality and vice,

stopped short in their course by remembrances of scenes of innocence and peace, in which a mother's anxious concern, a mother's reproving look, and a mother's gentle voice, speaking from the dead, exerted an influence more powerful than she could possibly have possessed while sitting under her own roof, and by her own fireside?

Let Christian parents use this influence well, and the effect of their instructions shall never die.

II. *A TEACHER'S influence after death.*—The instructor's office is seldom estimated aright. He takes charge of the child at the most important period of its life. He finds the mind in a rude, chaotic state. He promises, by the help of God, to form and fashion it anew.

How many difficulties to be overcome! How much discretion to be used! How much patience to be shown! How much resolution to be summoned! How much skill in taking advantage of times and circumstances! How much perseverance is indispensable!

Can dollars and cents pay for this? Will a punctual settlement of the term-bills cancel all sense of obligation which parents and pupils should feel toward one who does so much? It *ought* not, it *cannot* be.

The teacher's name will never be forgotten. His kind offices will be held in lasting remembrance.

The tear of fond regret will glisten in the eye, as the scholars, grown to adult age, make mention of

their old teacher—the teacher in his grave. *He, being dead, yet speaketh.*”

Have not instructors a high incentive to prove themselves faithful?

III. *The PHILANTHROPIST'S influence after death.*—He has a double drudgery to perform. Old rubbish must first be cleared away. Opposition and opprobrium must be met. The keen tooth of ingratitude will wound. Indifference on the part of those who should countenance and sustain must be patiently endured. All this, before one step can be taken in the way of amelioration and reform.

Some, who wish and mean well enough, have a settled repugnance to give themselves trouble for the sake of another's good. They are satisfied with the ripe results of the past, and dislike the crudity of the present.

Here is one powerful obstacle in the path of the philanthropist. Again, Mammon meets him (the despotic and powerful god of this lower world), and urges, and argues that things had best be left alone.

Meanwhile, the philanthropist toils slowly on. The poor are judiciously helped. The prisoners are raised from the low, damp dungeon; and, though not screened from punishment, are usefully employed. Reformation stretches out its long and powerful arm, and, as by the magician's wand, corrects abuses far and near.

The philanthropist wears away his strength in la-

bors too great for man. His days on earth are done. Is this the *end*? No. "*He, being dead, yet speaketh.*"

We may not all be *philanthropists* on a large scale; but the humblest may, in some degree, do his work, and share in his reward.

The man who builds a church, or endows a hospital, or establishes an orphan house, will be remembered for ages. Aye, by the proper investment of a much smaller sum, he may be providing bread for the hungry, long after he has passed away from earthly scenes.*

Kind and compassionate ones, go on in your useful ways. You are purchasing for yourselves *immortality*.

IV. *An AUTHOR'S influence after death.*—"Books," says Addison, "are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind."

All other arts of perpetuating ideas are, comparatively, short-lived.

Follow the pale, care-worn student to his closet—very likely a rude garret in some dilapidated, dreary house. Poverty and genius too often go hand in hand. With what perseverance he labors! He plans and executes; and then, dissatisfied with what is already done, he throws all aside, and resolutely begins anew. He weighs well his words, and squares each thought by the rule of reason and of truth. He develops some important theme.

* For a beautiful instance of the last form of charity, see Mrs. Kirkland's "*Holidays Abroad*," Vol. I. p. 33.

Though all is dust and dinginess about him, he draws forth brilliant illustrations from a well-stored mind, and finishes a work which he hopes may benefit his race. The Press—that mighty engine for good or ill—scatters abroad the winged words. The author, in his *garret*, is speaking to the *world*!

What eloquent orator has a voice which will reach so far? The stirring speech and the impassioned sermon have their effect upon the multitude who are privileged to hear; but with them, the influence, in a great degree, must end.

The author dies. Not so his works. He still speaks through many lands by many tongues. Though already entered into his rest, he is, in reality, vigorously at work. He is moulding the minds, and influencing the hearts of untold thousands.

When will *Shakspeare* be dead? Bishop Wilson and Hannah More are quite as much alive this moment, in their golden treasures of devotion, as when actually dwelling upon the earth.

V. *The CLERGYMAN'S influence after death.*—His life may have passed noiselessly away. His preaching and practice may have harmonized beyond the possibility of fault-finding. But many who attended upon his ministrations will have remained unmoved. He will leave the world under the painful conviction that, so far as these individuals are concerned, his labor has been altogether in vain.

Such an impression, however, would be wrong.

Often and often there comes forth from the faithful pastor's grave a more persuasive and melting eloquence than from the herald of the Cross when standing in the pulpit. His spirit—the fragrant memory of his life—lingers with his flock, and "*He, being dead, yet speaketh.*"

VI. *The influence of every GOOD PERSON after death.*

The illustrations which have been used thus far have been *particular*, and hence *limited* to the classes named. The proposition now stated is *general*. Without exception, it may be safely said, that every righteous person who dies will still be doing good after his departure from the earth. Indeed, so true is this, that in one of the prayers in the Office for the Holy Communion, in commemoration of the sainted dead, we bless God's holy name, for the good examples of all His servants who have departed this life in His faith and fear, and devoutly pray that we may follow in their steps.

We may all leave behind

"Footprints on the sands of time"—

footprints which will serve as waymarks to the bewildered and the wandering who come after.

What an incentive, in reflections like these, for living holy lives! Will not all be stirred up by them to walk in good and useful ways? What great matter is it to live twenty, or thirty or even forty years, and then to be forgotten?

The pagan historian Sallust was wise enough to say, that "Since the life which we enjoy is short, we should try to make the remembrance of us as lasting as possible."

We may *all* be living after death in the grateful memory of the world, if we spend our days aright.

Let the place of our burial be where it may—upon the towering top of some craggy peak, like that of Aaron; let the breathless corpse be wrapped in slimy sea-weeds, or lost sight of in the sands of the trackless desert, or carefully laid in the safe enclosure of the cemetery or the church-yard, where the hand of affection may pluck away the weeds and nurse the flowers—in any and in every case, a voice will be heard, a sweet, persuasive voice—a voice to which the living will gladly hearken; and from many a soul, cheered and instructed by the silent influence of a departed friend, will come forth the grateful testimony, "*He, being dead, yet speaketh.*"

SERMON III.

PRIDE AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?

While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee.—DANIEL iv. 30, 31.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR had reigned over the kingdom of Chaldea for forty years. At the end of this long lapse of time, sated with victory, and weary of excitement, he determined to dwell at Babylon, and gather about him, in this city of his greatness, enduring monuments of his wide-spread renown.

Soon afterward he saw, in his midnight visions, a great tree loaded with fruit; but he had hardly looked upon it, before an angel descended from heaven, and gave commandment that it should be cut down, and its branches, leaves, and fruit, scattered.

The trunk and the root were to be left in the ground, and bound with chains, among the beasts of the field, for the space of seven years.

None of the diviners and soothsayers could explain the meaning of the dream; and it was Daniel who dis-

closed to the astonished monarch that it related to himself.

"*You*," said the prophet, "*you* are represented by the great tree: you are to be brought low—to be reduced to the condition of a brute; but you shall after ward be restored again to your former glory."

Having made this awful announcement, Daniel most kindly entreated him to "break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor," that the threatened vengeance might be at least delayed.

But this earnest expostulation was offered in vain. One year after the revelation had been made, it was most marvelously fulfilled.

In enlarging upon this portion of Nebuchadnezzar's history, with a view of improving its important lessons, we shall be guided by the three prominent points about which all the lesser details naturally cluster:—*his Sin, his Punishment, and his Repentance*. May the Holy Spirit of God imprint the truths upon our hearts.

I. It was no crime in Nebuchadnezzar that he was a great man. There was no harm at all in being the ruler of a mighty kingdom, provided that his elevation to so high a place had been accomplished by honest means. His sin was *pride*. His success, in every thing he undertook, called forth no gratitude to God. His constant prosperity only hardened his heart. He considered himself as the contriver of his

own fortune. He gloried in the strength of his armies. He feasted his eyes with the prospect of exhaustless riches. He looked down with contempt upon prostrate foes. He drank in with greediness the fulsome flatteries with which fawning courtiers filled his ears. Walking proudly upon the roof of his palace, from which he could command an extensive view of the mighty capital of his vast empire, his mind reveled in dreams of greatness and glory.

For more than fifteen miles, on either hand, the great Babylon, "the Golden City," "the Lady of Kingdoms," "the Beauty of the Chaldees' Excellency," "the Praise of the whole Earth," was spread out before him.

He gazed upon its massive walls and brazen gates; its citadel and towers; its royal palaces; its idol temples; its hanging-gardens, and its varied marks of beauty and magnificence, until the feelings of pride which swelled his heart found utterance in words of self-satisfaction and vainglory:—"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

Pride has its *degrees*. It is measured by circumstances. None of us can reach the giddy height where Chaldea's monarch stood. *We* cannot be guilty of that degree of pride which made up *his* fearful sin. But, so far as outward circumstances are favorable to its growth, we are quite as likely to be wrecked upon this rock.

The hero, of nerve and judgment, and military skill, who can direct the movements of armies, and plan the successful assault, and head the fierce onset, is *proud* of this.

The man of letters, who can read with fluency the languages of the dead, and tell the measure of the stars, and trace out the pathway of comets, is more than gratified with his complete success.

The individual possessed of neither genius nor learning, but who, by plodding industry and far-sighted investments, or by lucky speculations, gathers up a heap of gold, gazes upon it with heartfelt satisfaction, as the fruit of his labors.

We need not go into the higher ranks of life to witness the effects of pride. They may be found in the humblest mechanic, the farmer, the day-laborer of any sort, whose honest industry has secured for him the comforts of a home; he forgets that his FATHER in Heaven has given him strength to labor—has saved him from dangers and sickness, and crowned his efforts with success.

It was for the warning of us *all*, that Moses wrote those solemn words, once addressed to the stubborn Jews:—"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, lest when thou hast eaten and are full, and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein, and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied, then thy

heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, and thou say in thy heart, *My* power and the might of *mine* hand, hath gotten me this wealth." Deut. viii. 11-13; 14-17.

It was for the warning of us all, that the fate of Nebuchadnezzar has been recorded. And this brings us to the second stage in his history.

II. His *punishment*. Daniel had foretold it in these dreadful words:—"O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken; thy kingdom is departed from thee; and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven; and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the MOST HIGH ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever HE will."

No further time was allowed for repentance. The day of mercy had gone by. The same hour was the sentence carried into execution. The proud and boastful words had hardly escaped his lips, when his mind became so disordered, that he fancied himself changed into an ox, and at once assumed the habits of that animal, roaming through the fields, and eating grass. What a grievous, frightful fall! The mighty monarch of Chaldea brought down to such a state!

Had trembling princes bowed before his throne, anxious to win his favor, or turn aside his wrath? Now is he banished from the abodes of men, an object

of pity or contempt: "and none so poor to do him reverence."

Did a hundred provinces send in their yearly tribute, to swell the coffers of the king, and purchase dainties for his festive board?

Groveling in the dust, crushed in mind, lost to all the tastes and habits of a man, "he did eat grass like an ox."

Had the carved and gilded roofs of magnificent palaces shielded him from the heat and cold?

Not even a tattered tent was left. His body was wet with the dew of Heaven, and the pitiless storm spent its fury upon his defenseless head.

Had purple, and fine linen, and sparkling gems, adorned his royal person?

Naked, and loathsome, and abhorred, "his hairs grew like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws." Well might Isaiah exclaim, in bold, poetic figures, in reference to this wretched prince: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cast down, which didst weaken the nations!" Isa. xiv. 12.

Such was the *punishment* of pride. The *degree* of punishment is determined by the degree of pride. Few can be guilty to the extent that Nebuchadnezzar was. Few can fall so terribly and so low.

But pride is *always* hateful unto God. Pride will certainly be punished. "Every one that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord." Prov. xvi. 5.

"God resisteth the the proud." St. James iv. 6. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Prov. xvi. 18. "A man's pride shall bring him low." Prov. xxix. 23.

Are the solemn declarations of God's word to be regarded as devoid of meaning? Shall He threaten, and will He not bring it to pass?

Can you call to mind no instances, within your own remembrance, in which pride has been most signally punished? Can you think of no one who boasted of the abundance of his wealth, afterward crippled by misfortune, and brought down to want and beggary? Have you heard of none, gifted with the highest power of mind, and idolized as the sons of genius, who have ended their days as raving madmen, or driveling idiots? Has the daughter of fashion, the matchless beauty, who bewitched and captivated by her charms, never been changed by disease into an object not only plain, but actually forbidding?

In all these ways, the Almighty has been punishing pride. Thus has He been repeating, with emphatic earnestness, the wholesome warning, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this: that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth." Jer. ix. 23, 24.

One stage more in Nebuchadnezzar's history is left.

III. His *repentance*. Seven long years of wretchedness accomplished that blessed work. Listen to his own touching account of it: "At the end of the days lifted up mine eyes unto Heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever and ever."

With humble and contrite heart he now confessed that God's judgments, although so terrible, had been good and just. This sincere acknowledgment received its merited reward. The glory and greatness of his kingdom was again restored. Councilors and lords sought his presence, and obeyed his will; and still more brightness shone upon his latter days, than that which had adorned his youth.

As if to make some atonement for his fault, by a full and frank confession, he published this declaration to the world: "I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride, he is able to abase."

How kind and merciful is God! The first and faintest prayer of the returning penitent is heard in Heaven. As soon as pride has been humbled, and the hardened heart made soft, he withdraws his chastening hand. He gives "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

We have all heard or read this story from our

earliest youth. It is too common to regard it as a gorgeous picture of an event long past, upon which we may gaze with wonder, but which conveys no warning to people of our time.

But the truth is, the same *sin* of which that king was guilty, is prevailing now. Nay, it is one to which the heart of man is chiefly prone.

The same *punishment*, limited, of course, by circumstances, is inflicted in these days.

The mode of relief—repentance and amendment—is still the same.

And how foolish it is to pride ourselves upon what God, of his bounty and goodness, has bestowed!

O vain man! "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Does the possession of money fill your heart with delight, and lessen your desire for better things?

God will find means to take it away.

Are the powers of mind which He has given, used only to advance your selfish purposes, or turned against the cause of truth?

The palsy or madness may be near, to put an end to your hopes.

Is beauty leading you astray, by exciting a desire for admiration, and causing you to waste your time in the preparation and putting on of gay and gaudy attire?

The brightness shall depart from your eyes, the roses shall fade from your cheeks. God *hates* pride, and he will grievously *punish* it.

Are any suffering under the rod of affliction? Let them take encouragement, from this history, to turn from their evil ways, and to expect the mercy and forgiveness which are promised to those who, by the dispensations of Providence, have been taught to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, that, in due time, He may lift them up.

SERMON IV.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

Looking unto Jesus.—**HEBREWS** xii., *part of 2d verse.*

THE scene opens in a dark and silent chamber. Doctor FRANKLIN is lying on his deathbed. For weeks and weeks he has been prostrate with disease. That active mind, which so long had been occupied with things of earth, was busied now with higher and nobler contemplations. He bids the nurse go down and bring a picture which he named, and fasten it on the wall opposite his bed, that he might look upon it when he pleased. And what think you that picture was? Some ancient historic heir-loom, which he dearly prized? Some scene of stirring interest, in which he, the great philosopher of his age, had borne a conspicuous part? No! It was a picture of our blessed SAVIOUR on the cross; and Doctor Franklin, whom many, in these evil days, have desired to make an infidel outright, died while gazing upon it with wistful eyes, his whole countenance lighted up with a sweet and placid smile. Poor and pitiable are the hopes of the moralist or the philosopher, who does not look to Christ Jesus as his Redeemer.

To what purpose, as we have stood by the bedside of our kindred or friends, so far as our hopes of their future happiness were concerned, to hear them say, like Socrates of old: "I go hence to good men and to to God, but of that I am not certain"? But, blessed be God's name, we have a sure and steadfast trust, which cannot fail.

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS." We behold HIM as crucified for us, and for *all* lost, undone sinners, on Good Friday. We rejoice at his resurrection at Easter. We recognize Him as God's own blessed Son—Christ, the King of Glory, the final Judge of quick and dead, the only hope of all the ends of the earth.

Notwithstanding the encouragement which is given us in the Scriptures, to "look unto Jesus," in every time of need, and to trust in him, all our lives long, our hearts sometimes fail us, and we are almost afraid to believe that He will hear our feeble prayers, and accept our imperfect services. But what stronger assurance can we possibly require? He died for *you* and for *me*. He is your Saviour and *mine*. God has always loved us, and he gave his only begotten Son to suffer the death of the cross, that we might be delivered from the curse of sin.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS. How? Is it by dwelling upon him in our imaginations, until we can bring back, as in a faithful picture, the marred visage of "*the MAN Christ Jesus*," who, eighteen centuries ago, suffered

death on the cross, in Judea, and who afterward rose from the dead?

Is it by fixing our eyes upon such a representation of the incarnate Saviour, as we sometimes see in the fine windows of churches, or, on a smaller scale, in the frontispiece of our prayer-books?

There is no doubt that such pictures *do* impress many minds for good. But, after all that we can say about them, this effort of the imagination, to recall the events of the past, and this skillful attempt of the artist to portray the outward form of Him who was "wounded for our transgressions," can, at best, serve only as a *means* to an *end*.

The "LOOKING UNTO JESUS," referred to by the apostle, is an act of faith, and the exercise of undoubting confidence and love. Nevertheless, it is a faith which *shows* itself, nay, I should have said, which *proves* itself by outward acts of obedience.

See those parents bringing their child to holy baptism. Why do they do it? Because it is a time-honored, respectable ceremony? Because they desire to have it christened, as its forefathers have always been? (It is only within a comparatively brief space of time that any class of people have been heard of who did not believe in infant baptism.) Because it is a convenient occasion for bestowing what is called its "given name"?

No! These were not the motives which influenced their minds. Those parents were "Looking unto

JESUS." They remembered his tender care for little children, and how he set forth their simplicity and trustfulness, as patterns to grown persons who would seek for entrance into his kingdom. They are looking unto HIM to bless their offspring in this ordinance of his appointment, and to receive it for his own child by adoption.

Then, again, at the bishop's visitation, why do persons come forward to be confirmed and blessed by him? Is it only a form or ceremony? Is it simply a sham or show? Oh! I should tremble for those who dare to say or think so.

The candidates for confirmation, who have been properly instructed, are "Looking unto JESUS," when they thus kneel before his chosen servant, and receive the blessing which he is authorized to bestow. They are looking unto HIM as the GREAT CAPTAIN of their salvation, in whose holy service they thus solemnly enlist. They are looking unto HIM to give them strength to wage a good warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And why is it that, month by month, God's faithful people draw near his altar, and eat of the living bread and drink of the cup of salvation? Is it a hypocritical act? Is it done in solemn mockery? or, is it designed to impose upon the world?

Ah! we are thus "Looking unto JESUS." We seek for fresh supplies of his gracious and ready help. We behold him, as it were, presiding at the heavenly

feast which his goodness has thus prepared for the weary and heavy laden soul.

Watch that poor, troubled one, as she retires to the privacy of the closet, and wrestles with God in earnest prayer. Some heavy weight of care is crushing her to the earth. No human power can lift it off. She has gone to the sanctuary for help. She is "Looking unto JESUS."

Has not the promise been given by Him who cannot lie: "Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me?"

Mark the hectic flush upon the cheek of the consumptive, and count the beatings of his wiry pulse. See unrelenting death, inch by inch, gaining ground in the contest with his victim.

But though life, with its sunny skies, and its flowery fields, is thus fading steadily away, no gloomy terrors darken the Christian's mind, no distracting doubts disturb his unwavering faith. He is "Looking unto JESUS."

Wasting health and decaying strength render the Saviour more and more precious to the believer's soul. The still small voice of his matchless love is whispering in the contrite sufferer's ear: "I have conquered death, and brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel."

Let us fall in with that funeral train as it moves slowly onward, bearing the corpse of a departed friend to its last resting-place. At length the spot is

reached, and all stand, with uncovered heads, around the open grave. The coffin is lowered to its place in solemn silence, and then—"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust!" Such is the end of worldly hopes.

Nay, not the *end*. Listen to those consoling words which the minister of God is speaking now: "We commit the body of our deceased brother to the ground, looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We have thus traced the course of a fellow-mortal from his baptism to his burial. But, by the eye of faith, we can penetrate within the vail, and follow him beyond the narrow boundaries of time.

The archangel's trump awakes the sleeping dead. The eternal Judge is seated on his throne. The books are opened. Dismay and horror seize upon the guilty and unpardoned throng who stand upon the KING's left hand. And why should those on the right appear less anxious and unconcerned?

They are "Looking unto JESUS." That same blessed and merciful Redeemer, who died for them on the cross, whom they confessed before men in baptism and confirmation, and the Lord's Supper, and glorified in lives of faithful obedience, is now to be their judge. They know in whom they have believed, and they only await his summons to enter the joy of their Lord.

To what source are *you* looking for comfort and support, amidst the trials and troubles of life—the pains of death, and the awful realities of the judgment? Is it to any earthly thing? If so, your hopes will be sure to fail. You may live on in delusion, until the trying moment comes, and then, when the prop is most needed, you will find yourself leaning on a broken reed.

More than likely, you belong to that large class of unhappy people who only allow themselves to think of the *present*, and who have formed no plans, and made no provision for the *future*.

Is this wise? Is it right? Is it doing justice by yourself? Is it showing a proper respect to Almighty God? When He has taken so much pains to point out the *way* of salvation, is it asking too much that you should exert yourself a little to *walk* in it?

None of us have been left in darkness or doubt. God, of his mercy, has showed to us what is good and right, and what he wishes us to do.

Oh, do not set your heart upon this world! Live not for the present only. Make timely preparation for the hour of death and the day of judgment. Love God. Do not be ashamed of being a Christian. Lay up treasure in Heaven. "LOOK UNTO JESUS."

SERMON V.

ST. PAUL IN BRITAIN.

The GOSPEL. . . which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven.—COLOSSIANS 1, *part of 23d verse.*

MARVELS which relate to worldly things, fly fast, and far. Long before the magnetic telegraph had triumphed over time and space, tidings of good and ill were borne on swiftest wings.

What wonder, then, that the message of redeeming love should soon be spread abroad?

St. Paul wrote the text, about the year of our Lord, sixty-two. Even in his day, the glad tidings of salvation had been so widely proclaimed, that it might be said, with almost a literal agreement with fact, that every ear had heard.

I have a special reason for settling this position first, which soon will be clearly seen.

When our Saviour sent forth the heralds of the Cross, they were cheered by the gracious promise: "*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" St. Matt. xxviii. 20. If this pledge has been truly kept, apostolic men must now be found upon this earth, who can trace back their authority to the chosen Twelve.

It is well known that the Bishops in our church claim that their powers have been thus derived. Another fact, equally well understood, is this: that the Episcopal Church in America was planted by a ministry tracing their succession through the Scottish and English lines.

If we are really members of that church which Christ established in Judea, we must be able to connect our portion of God's kingdom with that referred to in the text, when "the GOSPEL" was preached by Apostolic men "*to every creature under heaven.*" We profess to be able to do this.

It is flippantly and sneeringly said by some, that the church in England was founded by Henry the Eighth, during the sixteenth century, when several protestant denominations sprang up on the Continent.

This we deny. The church in England, the church from which we derive our own authority to minister and teach, was planted there centuries before—yea, *five hundred years* before the first missionary of the Papal church set foot upon those shores. We saw, from the text, that within a very few years after our Lord's ascension, "the Gospel of the kingdom" had been carried to every land.

The point of interest to us just now is to find out, if we can, *when* the church was planted in Britain, and *by whom*.

In the year of our Lord 596, when Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine, with forty monks, to bring

England under the authority of Rome, a church, complete in all its parts, was found existing there. Doctrines, discipline, worship, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—all arranged aright, and all showing that, at some earlier day, a branch from the mother church at Jerusalem had been carried to this far-off island in the shadowy West.

Who had planted this vine? It must have happened *very long* before, for TERTULLIAN says: "Some countries of the Britons, which proved inaccessible to the Romans, are subject to Christ."* And again, the golden-mouthed CHRYSOSTOM, who wrote one of the collects in our Prayer Book, declares: "The British Islands, situated beyond our sea, and lying in the very ocean, have felt the power of the Word; for even there churches are built, and altars erected."†

We have good reason for believing this to have happened in *Apostolic* times, since Gildas, a Briton born, and Abbot of Bangor, writes: "In the meanwhile (*i. e.* between the birth of Christ and the defeat of Boadicea), CHRIST, that true SUN, granted, for the first time, His rays (that is, His precepts) to this cold frozen Island, situated at so great a distance from the visible Sun."‡

We think we have full warrant for claiming that this vine was planted by *Apostolic men*, because EUSEBIUS asserts, that "some of the *Apostles* preached the

* Adv. Judæ. c. 7.

† Tom. vi. p. 635, Ed. Savil.

‡ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. ii. c. 3.

Christian doctrine in the most distant countries, and that they sailed over the ocean to those Islands which are called British.”*

We believe that we are justified in saying that it was *St. Paul* himself who then organized the church, for CLEMENS ROMANUS affirms that this Apostle traveled “to the utmost bounds of the West,” an expression often used to describe the British Isles.† ST. JEROME declares, that St. Paul, having been in Spain, “sailed from one ocean to another, and that the progress of his preaching reached as far as the extremity of the earth.”‡ And again, that “he preached the Gospel in the *Western* parts,” a term applied to Britain.§

More definitely still, THEODORET remarks: “Our fishermen and publicans, *and he who was a tent-maker* (plainly, Paul), carried the Evangelical precepts to all nations, not only to those who lived under the Roman jurisdiction, but also to the Scythians and the Huns; besides, to the Indians, *Britons*, and Germans: and thus universally they persuaded every race and nation of men to receive the precepts of HIM who was crucified.”|| But even without these proofs we could make good our case. That there was a church in Britain long before Augustine came, bearing the standard of papal Rome, is clear, because three Bishops from Brit-

* Eus. Evan. Demon. lib. iii. ca. 7.

† Ep. ad Corinth. ix. 4.

‡ Scrip. Ecc. in Paul.

‡ In Amos, c. 5.

|| Theod. lib. ix.

ain sat in the council of Arles, in Gaul, A. D. 314. Bishops from the same church took part in the Council at Sardica, A. D. 347, and at Ariminum, A. D. 359—all long before Augustine's day.

Linus, the first Bishop of Rome after the Apostles, was himself a Briton; so that Rome is in fact indebted to Britain, and not Britain to Rome.

As the shrewd Blackstone expresses it in his Commentaries—that great text-book of law—(b. 4. c. 8), “The ancient British Church, by whomsoever planted, was a stranger to the Bishop of Rome and his pretended authority.”

Helena, the mother of Constantine, was a Christian, and born in Britain. Many holy martyrs for the faith suffered in Britain during the Dioclesian persecution. Nay, “Augustine and his companions were indebted for their first night's lodging to the piety and well-known reputation of the good Lithardus, the Christian Bishop who accompanied Queen Bertha, wife of Ethelbert, from France, and who, for years before the time of Augustine, had daily preached and administered the Holy Eucharist in the Church of St. Martin's, near the royal city of Canterbury.”*

What becomes of the figment, then, that these devoted monks landed upon a savage shore, and founded anew a Christian church?

* Odenheimer on the *Origin of the Prayer Book*, p. 67. The writer here acknowledges his obligations to this admirable little work for many of the authorities quoted in this Sermon.

About the middle of the fifth century, the pagan Saxons invaded England, and gradually succeeded in driving the Britons, from the southeastern and central parts of the Island, to the mountainous districts of the west and north.

Augustine found matters in this state. The Bishop of Rome was then putting forth every effort to spread his power throughout the world. Augustine, his agent, began at once to try to unite the infant English establishment, founded by himself, with the ancient British church, which had always been there since Apostolic days.

He held a conference with the clergy of the British church at a place on the borders of Herefordshire, called "Augustine's Oak." No terms of union were agreed on, and the assembly broke up. Again they met. Augustine wished them to adopt various Roman forms, and join with his band of missionaries in converting the unbelieving Saxons.

Dineth of Bangor answered the Italian monk, and right bravely did he speak. He was ready, he said, to pay that respect and honor to the Bishop of Rome which was due to other Bishops of the church, who all had equal rights; but that he would not recognize those *usurped* powers which Augustine strove to press.

The struggle went on. It was a contest of the rich and powerful against the poor and weak. At last the British church was obliged to yield, and Augustine

had his way. Roman usages were brought in. The Pope of Rome was reluctantly obeyed.

But was no further effort made to throw off the oppressor's yoke? Indeed there was. The faithful sons of the old British church were heard protesting against the tyranny of Rome from that time until the days of the eighth Henry, when, gathering up all their strength, they drove out the intruders from the land, and swept clean of superstitious rites the temple of the Lord.

Was this removal of cobwebs and dust from the church which had stood there since the days of Paul making *a new church*? The one who asserts this had better read history again.

"The church remained the same after it was reformed as it was before, just as a man remains the same man after he has washed his face as he was before; just as Naaman, the leper, remained the same Naaman, after he was cured of his leprosy, as he was before."

The whole body of Christian people in the British Isles by one mighty effort were enabled to regain their ancient rights. It was not until twelve years after Elizabeth began to reign, that the pope persuaded his adherents throughout the land to set up an opposition to the church in Britain, which, in the days of Cranmer, had declared herself reformed and free.

The English Romanists then broke off from the ancient stock, and upon them the sin of separation rests.

But so anxious was the pope to keep his usurped power, that he offered to sanction the use of the Prayer Book in the English tongue.* Failing in this, an effort was made to invalidate the orders of the British clergy by an absurd story in regard to Archbishop Parker's consecration; but Lingard, their best historian, has acknowledged the falsehood of this charge. It is readily granted that King Henry, who first gave the death-blow to papal power, was a miserably wicked man; perhaps few worse have lived.

But we are to look at the merits of the *work*, and not to that of the *agents*.

Are our Republican institutions the less sound and good, because the writings of Paine, the infidel, rendered the most essential service in starting the great enterprise, and because profane and licentious men fought our battles, and helped to secure our freedom? Certainly not.

The work of the Reformation was of God, be the instruments who and what they may.

The church founded in Britain by Apostolic men was restored to her ancient rights. It is this church which has brought down to us the blessed Gospel, with all its promises and hopes.

Let us remember with gratitude the glorious company of the Apostles, to whom the Saviour first made

* Strype's Ann. i. 340; Burnet's Hist. ii. 645, etc.; Collier, vi. 308, 309.

known His will, and the noble army of Martyrs, who shed their blood in testimony of the truth.

We have the blessings of the Gospel for *ourselves*. Are we doing our part toward spreading the knowledge of the Lord throughout the world? The claims of Missions—Diocesan, Domestic, Foreign—are resting upon us all.

A clergyman who was too much disposed to confine his labors close at home, once asked the Duke of Wellington what he thought of the obligation of supporting *Foreign Missions*. The blunt old soldier answered: "Look to your marching orders, sir! '*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature!*'"

Christians, are you mindful of this duty? If you cannot buckle on the armor of the heralds of the Cross, you can help to furnish the means to support them in this work.

SERMON VI.

BACKSLIDING.

When the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion.—1 KINGS xiii. 26.

I MUST needs tell the whole story connected with the text, in order to make the matter plain. Although almost every body has a Bible now, it is a book so little read by many who possess it, that I am afraid that it will be a new story to some.

The *practical* part of the sermon may be the shorter; but we cannot well mistake the lesson which it is important should be learned.

Jeroboam was a young man of spirit, and of decided military tastes. The germ of a Napoleon was implanted in his soul. Solomon, being attracted by his striking appearance and martial bearing, appointed him captain of the host.

The King of Israel, in his dotage, lost, in a great degree, his well-deserved reputation for wisdom; and, among other gross sins, was guilty of idolatry. This last circumstance, as you will see, made Jeroboam a

much more conspicuous personage than he might otherwise have been.

One day, as the young soldier was walking out by himself, a prophet met him, and seizing hold of a new garment which he had on, tore it into twelve pieces. This might have seemed very unpardonable rudeness, had not the man of God gone on to explain that by this symbolical action he meant to show that the kingdom should soon be divided into twelve parts. He then gave Jeroboam *ten* pieces of the cloth, signifying thereby that this number of tribes would acknowledge him as their king, while only *two* would be left to the son of Solomon. Even this degree of forbearance was to be shown, not for any favor toward Solomon, but for faithful David's sake.

As you may well imagine, the old king was angry enough when he heard of this, and became very jealous of the young man, to whom he had hitherto been devotedly attached. Indeed, he tried to kill Jeroboam; supposing, in his folly, that such an act on his part could bring to nought the unchanging plans of God.

The youth fled to Egypt, and there remained in obscurity until Solomon's death. Rehoboam took his father's place upon the throne, but there were great complaints among the people; and, in the midst of the excitement and confusion, the exile hastened back from the land of the Pyramids, and ten out of the twelve tribes proclaimed him king, according to the prophet's words.

The rebels (as they were most likely to be called) separated from their brethren, and went and set up a government for themselves.

One would have thought that having been thus signally prospered, Jeroboam would show some gratitude to God, and do what he could to please him. Instead of this, he seems to have had but one object in view—the advancement of his own glory.

There was a difficulty, however, which greatly troubled him. At certain seasons of the year, all the Jews were obliged to go up to the temple at Jerusalem, that there, in God's own house, they might unite with his chosen priests, in celebrating the holy festivals. Jeroboam dreaded lest these repeated visits to the ancient capital might wean the hearts of the people from himself, and thus weaken his authority.

In sore perplexity, he determined to do what no man has a right even to *attempt*, to make a religion for himself, and to appoint ministers to serve his own selfish ends. An altar was accordingly set up at Bethel, and Jeroboam stood by it to officiate as chief priest, (thus imitating the practice of Pagan nations), while the people looked on in solemn silence.

But what means that man in the rough garment, who runs thus hastily through the crowd, and boldly confronts the besotted king, in his sacrilegious work?

It is a prophet of God. Looking up at the heap of hewn stones, upon which the flame of sacrifice had been already kindled, he cried, and said: "O altar,

altar! thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. And as a sign that my words are true, behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon thee shall be poured out."

Jeroboam was highly indignant at this unexpected interruption, and lifted his hand as a signal to the multitude to seize the offending prophet. He would have done much better to have confessed his sin, even though it mortified his pride. The arm thus rashly raised dropped lifeless by his side.

Thank God, Jeroboam, that He did not strike thee dead! The withering of thy arm was an act of mercy, to save thee from still greater evil.

When, instead of cutting short our days, our heavenly Father shows interest enough in our welfare to punish us in some milder way, such as sickness, or poverty, or the loss of a limb, we ought not to murmur, but rather acknowledge at once that we have been doing wrong, and set about correcting it.

Jeroboam now knew full well whose messenger the rough prophet is. But here his extreme selfishness again appears. He is not at all sorry for his grievous sin, in having tried to set up a church of his own in opposition to the church of God, but is distressed at the sight of his withered arm.

His personal appearance was injured thereby, and

he could no longer, as a warrior, wield his sword. He therefore begs the prophet, with apparent earnestness, to ask God to remove his curse.

The prayer was answered; but Jeroboam, instead of being grateful to the Almighty, wishes to get rid of his trifling sense of obligation, by a small sacrifice; and accordingly he invites the prophet to go home and dine at his house, and receive a reward.

How easily people imagine they can pay off God's ministers for the benefit which they bring!

The man of God declined the proposal upon the ground that he had been strictly commanded not to tarry at all among these idolatrous people, but to hasten back another way from that by which he came.

Now we have reached a melancholy part of the story. Thus far, the prophet had acted with a holy boldness, which well became the important office which had been entrusted to him.

On the road to Jerusalem, being weary, perhaps, with the labor and excitement of the day, he sat down under a broad and branching oak, and was wrapped up in his own reflections, (some of them very pleasing to his self-esteem), when he was drawn into a difficulty for which he was not at all prepared. An old *false* prophet, (there are always such persons in the world), had been told by his sons of the strange things which had taken place that day at Bethel; and the father's curiosity became so much excited, that he

asks which way the true prophet had gone, and starts, with all haste, in pursuit.

Finding him seated quietly in the shade, in the manner before described, he introduced himself as a brother prophet, and insists upon his returning to his house, to take some refreshment. The true prophet *ought* to have said *No*, and speeded on his way. But the devil had now made sure of his victim. So the true prophet very foolishly yielded to temptation, and was soon comfortably reclining at the false prophet's table.

He must have felt some upbraidings of conscience, even while he ate and drank; but he could not have conceived of half the dangers which he ran, in thus foolishly disobeying God.

In the midst of the feast, the old false prophet rose up, and said with great solemnity, no doubt, because he was declaring what God had told him: "Thus saith the Lord: Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept his commandment, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drank water in the place of which the Lord did say to thee: Eat no bread and drink no water: thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers."

The true prophet must have been thunder-struck, when he heard these terrible words. It is not likely that he sat any longer at the table, although he

could have had but little idea what the fearful threatening meant.

If these men had been wise, something might have even then been done to turn aside the coming vengeance. Had the old false prophet, who, for once, had spoken truth, kneeled down, side by side, with the true prophet, who had been thus unhappily betrayed into sin, and both had earnestly besought God's pardon, the conclusion of the story might have been different. We know how merciful God is.

Instead of this, however, the true prophet mounted his beast and rode off in haste. But, alas! he was only rushing onward to destruction.

A lion sprang out of the thicket and killed him; and then, to show that it was a Divine judgment, the fierce creature did not devour his prey, but kept guard over the body, till the old false prophet, learning what had happened, hurried to the spot. He recognized in the mangled and bleeding corpse, the unfaithful man of God who had so lately shared his hospitality, and buried his dishonored remains, with mourning, in his own tomb.

And then, as to the perverse Jeroboam, we read that he "returned not from his evil way, but made again, of the lowest of the people, priests of the high place. . . . And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth."

The great lesson to be learned from all this is, *the*

danger of falling away into sin, after having once been servants of God. There was very much to admire in the character of the prophet who came to such a deplorable end. But, in one short hour, what a change came over him!

From being bold and obedient, he became vacillating and rebellious. From being high in the favor of God, he became the object of contempt, and was blasted by the breath of his displeasure.

He was a backslider! Are you a backslider?

Such persons do not realize what these words imply. They mean that those who have actually set out in the road to Heaven, and accomplished part of the journey, are sliding back into the ways of sin, becoming careless about their prayers, and reading the Bible, and attendance at church and alms deeds; entering with renewed relish upon wicked practices which once they had resolution enough to forsake.

Some slight temptation is the secret of this falling away, a temptation, perhaps, no greater than when the true prophet accepted the invitation of the old false one, to eat bread at his house. But such trifling temptations are oftentimes the most dangerous we can have.

It may seem a small matter to go to bed at night without kneeling down to pray, or to stay away for a few Sundays from church, or to eat or drink too much for the sake of appearing sociable and good-humored, or to tell a "white lie," as some choose to

call it, or to dress in finery which we cannot afford, or to do many other things of this sort ; but these, or even *one* of them, may be the direct cause of our becoming backsliders.

It might seem almost unnecessary in a book like the Bible—God's own word to man—a record describing such great events as the Creation and the Deluge—to fill so many pages with the story just recited, as to occupy most of a sermon, as I have done, in telling it ; but certainly, if unreclaimed backsliders must go hereafter where we are assured they do, the time has been well employed in warning them.

Oh, let no one ever venture to say, in a trifling way, (if such be your unfortunate state,) "I have fallen from grace—I was once a professing Christian, but now am nothing!"

Rather kneel humbly on your knees, and beg God with all your heart, that he will mercifully "heal your backslidings," and receive you again to his favor.

It is too dreadful a thing to think of, to be living in the condition of backsliders.

Remember the prophet who was slain by the lion ! And there is another lion, more fierce and blood-thirsty—the devil—who will seize upon backsliders, and carry them away to his den.

May the Son of God, who came to "destroy the works of the devil," save us from him !

SERMON VII.

THE LACK OF CLERGYMEN, AND THE REMEDY.

The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers. Kings, with their armies, did flee, and were discomfited, and they of the household divided the spoil.—PSALM lxxviii, 11th and 12th verses.

THUS graphically does the Royal poet portray the triumphs of Israel over the hosts of the proud and the mighty.

His language, however, has a still wider application. Not only are we to understand it as referring to that glorious day, when, by God's command, proclamation was made for his poor oppressed people to assemble themselves, and march in triumph out of Egypt, and when their numerous adversaries fled at their approach, but also to the still more wonderful victories, under the Christian dispensation, which have been gained by the preaching of the Cross.

But it is not of *conquests* that we are now to speak. It is the less pleasing task of pointing out the secret why the triumphs of the church, in these days, are comparatively so few, and to press home the *necessity* and the *obligation* of doing something in this behalf.

God has given commandment, that the ministers of

his word shall be sent forth into all lands to prepare the nations for the final judgment, which is hastening on apace. The church has obeyed this direction to some extent; but still, from every quarter of the globe, is heard the Macedonian cry, from those sunk in ignorance and sin, saying to such as have the light of life, "Come over and help us!"

There never was a time when the call for faithful clergymen was so loud and urgent. The population of the world increases day by day. We are told that, within half a century, the arts of civilization, so favorable to life, have doubled the inhabitants of England. And can any one doubt that our own land is filling up with amazing rapidity? Can any one deny that the spiritual wants of this great multitude are but poorly provided for?

It is a most alarming fact, my friends, that just at this time, when the ministers of God are most needed, there is an annual decrease in the ratio of ministerial supply. This is by no means confined to our own church. All denominations are complaining of the same sad state of things. And is there no *remedy* for this? There *must* be; and then the question comes, What is it? Somebody will very likely answer, that we ought to *pray*.

Yes, so we should, for thus our Lord has said: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He

will send forth laborers into His harvest." St. Matt. ix. 37, 38.

But this is not enough. We can do much more than this to supply the alarming deficiency in the ranks of the clergy. Let us see.

There are three classes of persons from which the church may rightfully claim a succession of recruits for the work of the ministry. And first, after the example of her Divine Lord, she may call upon *men of years and experience*, in other walks of life, to forsake the seat of commerce, and the paths of the learned professions, and buckle on the armor of Christ's valiant soldiers.

Next, she may appeal to *young men* who have just completed their academic course, and who are as yet uncommitted to any particular business or profession, to consecrate their best gifts to God's service.

The *third* class, and that from which the Christian ministry should naturally receive the largest number of recruits, is that composed of *boys who have been trained up to be clergymen*.

It is the imperative duty of every parish priest to do all within his power to turn the minds of these three classes of persons to the holy office to which his own life has been devoted; that, when he shall be summoned hence by death, there may be others left to take up the standard of the Cross, and press onward in the fight.

We appeal to parents, in God's name, and ask them

to devote their sons to this high and noble work. High and noble indeed it is! Sinful men made ambassadors for Christ; clothed with power from God to preach and baptize; chosen as the guides and governors of His people; and standing at the door of His kingdom, to welcome home the returning penitent.

No human being, be his calling or office what it may, has any thing like the influence and power wielded by the humblest minister of God.

Parents, you are ambitious for your sons. Here, then, is a field in which your highest aspirations for their advancement can be more than realized. Resolve to devote at least one son to the ministry. Do you say that it is your earnest desire, but that you must wait and see what the tastes and dispositions of the child will be? You need not. His tastes and dispositions will be formed and fashioned, in a great degree, by the course of training which you yourselves pursue. Should you allow him to mix with bad boys, and acquire evil habits and desires—if, when a child, he chews, and smokes, and drinks, and swears, and plays cards, as a matter of course, these habits will grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength—and you need not expect him to become a clergyman.

On the other hand, if you are really anxious to see your son a chosen servant of Christ, to minister at the altar, frankly converse with your pastor upon the subject, and be guided by his direction and advice.

We have high authority from the sacred Scriptures that the counsel thus offered is safe and right. I beg that parents will read and ponder over the histories of Samuel and Timothy, which have been written for their learning, and see if they have no encouragement to follow examples so bright and beautiful.

I entreat them to make it the subject of especial prayer, that God will help them thus to train their sons aright. Let father and mother, on bended knee, say again and again, in the privacy of secret devotion, when the soul wrestles earnestly, and with a perseverance which is discouraged by no delay: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that the desire of my heart is to see this son laboring to save the souls of his fellow-men. I ask not the great things of the world for him, but would rather behold him in the humblest station in the ministry, called thereto and blessed of Thee, than wearing the proudest trophies of earthly distinction. Take him, O God, for that service: change his heart; inspire him with desire for the work; qualify him for it; let him be the honored instrument of winning many souls to Christ—and then my dearest wish for him will be gratified."

If you have *faith* in the promises of God, you cannot doubt, my friends, that such a request will be graciously answered.

You may, if you choose, educate your child according to the maxims of the world, and perhaps live long enough to see him a successful lawyer, or a skillful

physician, or a thriving merchant, or a shrewd politician; but how much greater your satisfaction, when your eyes are looking out for the last time upon earthly scenes, if you can have the indescribable happiness of beholding your son a good and faithful minister of God, earning for himself, by his work of faith and labor of love, the respect and affection of hundreds and thousands of his fellow-men, and certain of a glittering crown and imperishable delights in the Paradise of the blessed!

But, allowing that the appeal which has just been made to parents should produce the desired result, some years must necessarily be passed before these boys can grow up, and be prepared for the sacred office. Meanwhile, multitudes are perishing for lack of knowledge, and are going down to the grave untaught and unblessed. What ought we to do in such an emergency as this?

I call upon young men, who have hitherto been engaged in other walks of life, to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

4 If the salvation of *one* immortal soul be of more worth than all the wealth of the world, is it not something to be thought of, as a reasonable proposal, that you should assume the vast responsibilities of that office which will authorize you to act as the guides of the blind, the comforters of the sorrowful, and the ambassadors from God to men?

Your education may be wholly inadequate to

qualify you to edit a Hebrew Bible, or to translate the Prayer Book into Chinese, but the church needs workmen of every grade. She already has her learned champions to do battle with the subtle wisdom of the world; she has her eloquent divines, to charm the ears of the fastidious and refined; she has her polished and winning messengers to send forth where such agencies are required; but, most of all, she lacks just now a rough-and-ready clergy, to go out into the highways and neglected regions of the earth, to "warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak."

Young men, think of the shortness of life! Think of the nearness of the Judgment, and then settle it with yourselves whether you are consulting your real interest and happiness most by spending your days in the pursuit of worldly things, or in taking up the Cross of Christ, and in pressing onward, through difficulties and toils, to certain triumphs on earth, and to everlasting glory in heaven.

How many wealthy persons there are who, having no sons of their own, could easily furnish the means for educating some poor boy for the ministry. Who will do this?

Those who wish to be living and doing good upon the earth after death, will think of what I say. Oh, that all who *can* would be ready to aid in this blessed work! Then would the pressing wants of the church be soon supplied. Then, according to the glowing

language of the text, the triumphs of the Gospel would be widely spread. "The Lord will give the word. Great will be the company of the preachers. Kings with their armies—even Satan, with his angels and all his mighty host, will flee and be discomfited, and they of the household of faith shall take the spoils"—precious souls, rescued from ignorance, and error, and sin; and faithful ministers of God, who have turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever!

SERMON VIII.

SIN OF SELFISHNESS.

None of us liveth to himself.—ROMANS xiv., *part of 7th verse.*

IT was a saying of Plato, a heathen philosopher, whom Christians might many times listen to with profit, "I was not born for myself alone: my country claims a part, my relations claim a part, and my friends claim a part in me."

Worldly policy, on the other hand, claims for its motto that hateful proverb, "Every man for himself, and God for us all."

Self is the first and ruling object with the unrenewed heart. This narrow, contracted spirit is manifested in early childhood. The tiny hand which is stretched out with greediness to seize the biggest apple and the most tempting cake, will, when nerved with greater strength, be grasping more and more.

Selfishness is a fault which injures and degrades the soul. It lessens a man in the estimation of every one about him; and, if a verdict could be pronounced by his conscience, without bias or control, it makes one think less even of himself. To deny ourselves for the good of others, to love those whom we are

bound to love with a pure and unselfish affection, to labor for our country's good with a true and disinterested heart—this is the true secret of unity and happiness in families and neighborhoods, and of peace and prosperity in the State.

The sympathy of kind and considerate hearts is all that renders life endurable. Take away this element of comfort, and what a burden it becomes.

To rejoice with them that do rejoice and to weep with them that weep, is a most important rule of the Christian code. The philosophy of ancient Greece abounds in the marvels which sympathy, regarded as a miraculous, wonder-working power, could do. It was said "that two harps being tuned alike, and one being played, the chords of the other would follow the tune with a faint, sympathetic music. It was believed that precious stones had sympathies with peculiar persons and characters. Nay, even the influence of the stars shed their virtue upon men by sympathy."

Curious as such speculations are, I shall not pursue them here. My object is simply to bring before you that active sympathy which enables us to enter into and to share the emotions of a fellow-being—be those emotions glad or gloomy—and which leads us to rejoice or suffer with him.

Sympathy is a faculty which belongs to our spiritual nature. Outward circumstances may, indeed, influence and move it; but, for the most part, we have it under complete control. Indeed, sympathy may be

buried so deep under the weight of cold and repulsive selfishness, that no sign of its existence will be shown, although misfortune and misery present themselves in their most threadbare and wretched garb.

The heart becomes as hard as a stone. The fountain of tears is dried up. The man is changed to a beast.

"NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF." In these few words, St. Paul lays down the main feature which distinguishes true and consistent Christians from the selfish world, and from those who, by following a worldly policy, bring discredit on the Christian name. So long as we can consent to live for ourselves alone, the root of the matter is not in us.

Christians claim to be disciples of that Saviour who laid aside the power and glory which belonged to Him, as God's own Son, in heaven, and spent a life of self-denial upon the earth, to rescue us from wretchedness and woe. "He died for all," writes the Apostle, "that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him," who suffered so much in our behalf. And our Saviour himself has said: "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."

Blind and presumptuous, then, are those who, while claiming to bear this cross, neither feel its weight, nor suffer its reproach. In what trumpet tones does the prophet speak, when he utters the solemn warning, "Wo to them that are at ease in Zion!" Alas! how sadly, in these selfish days, are we falling behind in walking in the steps of Christ.

In earlier times, Christians were sons of consolation, because they fulfilled, in part, their Master's office by gracious ministrations to the poor and sick.

While the very name of *hospital* was unknown in heathen tongues, the world was blessed by these abodes for wretchedness and want as fast and so far as Christian truth prevailed.

But it is not of generalities that I would speak. The fault of selfishness must be brought nearer home, if we are ever to know its guilt.

I will sketch, in rough outline, three pictures from daily life; in which each one, as it suits him best, can arrange the coloring and the tint. They are not portraits, mind you, of monsters in wickedness and crime, but of those who, in particulars not a few, are followers of Christ. Selfishness is their besetting sin.

Take first what may be called *the polished literary man*. His mind is cultivated with uncommon care. His taste is exquisite and refined. All departments of the world of letters have been more or less explored. The embracing of Christianity has cost him nothing. So far from this, the priceless treasures of Christianity have added to his stores.

Now, there is certainly nothing to find fault with here. But the truth is, the cultivation of such tastes and habits cause dangers to spring up which did not exist before. Ordinary society becomes irksome. Any other than a literary atmosphere is hard to breathe. Sympathy with sorrow and suffering, especially when

found among stupid ignorance and squalid poverty, soon begins to deaden and decay. The circle in which such a person lives is becoming less and less. Selfishness is preying upon the heart.

Christian, behold the smile of benevolence and love which beams in the countenance of your Lord, and learn to live for others, although their minds and manners may be rough, and not at all in accordance with your taste.

If the selfishness which refinement, unsanctified, begets could be cured in no easier way, the remembrance how soon its cherished idols will be scattered to the winds must show its folly, even though we discover not its sin.

See all the choicest books in which the literary man has so carefully placed his name, and marked his favorite passages, spread out before the world, and the auctioneer handing them over to the highest bidder!

How thoughts like these will open our eyes, and make us more ready to look abroad for opportunities of doing good, and of leaving some unselfish mark upon the times in which we live!

As another portrait in our series, I place *the covetous man*. Very likely he knows not that this grievous fault can be laid to his charge. So many are trudging along the same dusty road, that he does not realize that he is going wrong.

He has set his heart upon becoming rich. No sin thus far. Riches may be fairly gained, and most use-

fully employed. The danger is in the principles and habits which they so often help to form. Self is thought of in every hope and plan. The tender sympathy which once could readily be reached by sights and sounds of woe, is blunted or destroyed. To scrape, and save, and sacrifice comfort, and shut out the appeals of mercy—this is now the rule.

Suppose that these efforts are successful. Does not selfishness pay dearly for its gains? The man's nature is wholly changed. He can no longer lift his thoughts above this earth. His very countenance has acquired a mean, money-loving expression, and his voice is fawning in its tone. Habits have become too fixed to be changed at will. Selfishness has grown to be a second nature.

The *disposition* to give has not enlarged with the *ability* to do so. The man may profess to be a Christian, but no sacrifice will he make to prove himself sincere. He would cheerfully expend a good round sum for a piece of showy furniture for his house, or, feast, for ostentatious display; but when called upon to pay his fair proportion for the spread of the Gospel, he would imagine himself to be quite poor.

The Bible teaches that true Christians do not live for themselves. What then can the end of that person be, who thus passes his days without caring for the wants of the poor, or the claims of the church of God?

I have one picture more. It is a delicate subject—

the selfishness which mothers of families—Christians beyond all doubt—are liable to contract.

There is so much to respect and love in the class which I am about to describe, that it is an ungrateful task to draw attention to faults. They are keepers at home: active, prudent, and industrious; kind, gentle, and devout, never meddling with what does not concern them; and caring far more for the comfort and welfare of their households than for their own.

This is all most commendable and right. But suppose that *every* Christian should do this much, and no more. If no one is willing to go beyond her own family circle, who is to attend to the sick? who will console the sorrowful? who is to care for the poor? who is to instruct the ignorant? who is to wait upon the dying?

There must be *some* unselfish persons to be found, or all this work will be left undone.

Now, who, besides those actually hindered by physical inability, ought to consider themselves as excused from taking their share in such duties?

Indolence suggests that it is very fatiguing. I grant it. Selfishness argues that there is more than enough to do at home. Very likely.

Morbid delicacy objects that it will be trying and disagreeable. No doubt of it.

False pride whispers that it would be out of character and unbecoming, and that one will be obliged to descend from her dignified rank. Perhaps so.

Christians, followers of that Saviour "who went about doing good," "who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor," can you thus venture to drug your consciences, and neglect your duty, and offend your God—and all in obedience to selfishness?

If we never do more than we find it perfectly convenient, agreeable, or easy, we shall never accomplish much. What cross do you carry? What sacrifices do you make? What difficulties do you overcome? What charities do you perform? What scenes of desolation do you cheer? Whose tears do you dry? When have you ever done or given so much to the cause of charity or the church, as to make you feel that you had denied yourself some personal convenience or gratification, in order to please God?

It is not the whole of religion, by any means, to worship God in fine temples, and discharge our duties at home.

Mind not what standard the easy, shiftless world may set in matters of this kind.

I would give little for the hopes of Christians who are not living unselfish lives, and who, by good works performed on earth, are not laying up treasure in heaven; who cannot say with holy Paul, when speaking of the whole body of God's believing people, "NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF!"

SERMON IX.

LOSS AND GAIN.

What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—
ST. MATTHEW xvi. 26.

A PLAIN, blunt question this. Prudent people are wont to look into the profit and loss of every business transaction in which they propose to engage.

Our Saviour invites them to show the same discretion in concerns of greater moment. He would have each one ask himself, while risking his immortal soul for the sake of the perishing body, Am I making a good bargain? Although formed from the dust, and doomed to return to it again, we have that within us which unites us unto God. The body is merely the servant of the spirit. It is altogether unlike and inferior to it.

The body, which now clogs and inthralls the spirit, shall be soon dissolved, and return to its kindred dust. But when the heavens have departed as a scroll, and the earth and all things therein have been burned up, when the sun and moon have withdrawn their shining, and the stars stand still in their courses, the soul will remain fresh and vigorous. Let untold myriads

of years be past, and its existence will then be no nearer its ending than before. Is it not worth while to render so long a life happy?

The value of the soul may also be seen from considering the *price* which has been paid for its redemption. It was nothing less than the blood—the precious blood!—of God's own dear Son.

Nor is this the only way in which the Almighty has shown His interest in our good. What but His knowledge of the endless life of each one of us, which must either be indescribably blessed or miserable, has led Him to send forth His ambassadors, to establish His church, to strive by His Spirit, to warn by His threatenings of wrath, and to woo by the offers of love?

But, notwithstanding these plain proofs that the soul is the only possession which should engage any large portion of our thoughts, circumstances, education, and the evil desires of the flesh, and debasing influences of various sorts, make us think less of it than of most things else.

Take an example where you please, and, unless the Holy Spirit of God has wrought a great revolution in his nature, you will find that man, even though he may talk much of a coming change, still looks to this world as the centre of all his hopes.

Hence the grievous struggle before *time* can be kept long enough out of mind to allow *eternity* to present

itself, spreading out in boundless extent, and full of the most solemn realities.

But this we *must* do, however hard and unpleasant it may be. And no one need expect to have his heart cut away from the objects upon which its affections have so long been fastened, without pain while the operation is going on, and violent throbbings long afterward.

The sinner will not bring himself to believe that his present happiness must be short, until God has taught him that the soul's best portion is in another world. Those about him may suffer loss, and be robbed by death of kindred near and dear, and still he will deceive himself, and neglect to provide for his eternal welfare.

Does not this description remind you of some whom you know full well? Nay, is it not the image of your own selves, reflected in the mirror of truth?

"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Here our Saviour proposes a most favorable case. The man who is represented as bartering his soul for some temporal convenience or pleasure, makes the best of his bargain. He is said to "*gain the whole world.*"

But what individual ever did this? Alexander the Great came as near as any one to the extreme limit of earthly ambition. But look at the map

of the world; and, after setting his mark upon every country conquered by his arms, see how very inconsiderable a part of the globe it was!

Besides, every province which he wrested from another's sway, was so much loss to that rival of his greatness, and a daily demonstration of the uncertainty of Fortune, and of the fickleness with which she bestows her favors.

Allowing, for a moment, if you will, that *some* might gain "the *whole* world," is there such unalloyed happiness in its possession, that the successful victor would be recompensed for the loss of his soul?

Whatever enjoyment the discontented or romantic may promise to themselves in things at a distance, yet there is, in fact, no more miserable condition in the world than to be at the top of greatness, and to feel that there is nothing more left to aspire after. None of you are mad enough to suppose, (although ready and anxious to barter the soul for the best price it will bring), that "the *whole* world," or even any considerable part of it, will be given you in exchange. There are too many souls in the market, to leave very large shares of richness, or greatness, or glory, to be paid for each.

The devil, who tempts people to make these foolish bargains, is very apt to *offer more*. He has no hesitation in saying to any and to every one, who will listen to his smooth and persuasive words: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and

worship me." All this pleasure which you long after, shall certainly be yours, if you will give me your soul!

Those who accept his terms, forget that they are listening to the "*father of lies*." They forget that this is God's world. They forget that the false and flattering tradesman who thus offers them, at wholesale, the good things of life, has no more right to make the proposal, than to set a price upon one of the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, or a jewel snatched from an archangel's crown.

So short-sighted and foolish is man! I once read of a woman whose house was on fire. She was very active in removing her goods, but forgot her child, who was asleep in the cradle. At last she thought of the poor babe, and ran, with earnest desire, to save it. But it was now too late; the flames prevented her from crossing the threshold.

Judge of the agony of mind which wrung from her the bitter exclamation: "Oh, my child! my child! I have saved my goods, but lost my child!"

So will it be with many a poor sinner, who spent all his life in the occupations of the world, while the "one-thing needful" was forgotten. What will it then avail for a man to say: "I secured a good place, or a good trade, or profession, but I lost my soul? I made many friends, but God is my enemy. I heaped up riches, but now they must all be left."

And yet the world is full of those who are acting

this foolish part. It is a singular exception to a broad rule, to find one, here and there, who is not, in some way or other, risking the loss of his soul.

Look at the ambitious student, or the scheming politician, or the greedy glutton, or the grasping miser, or the child of fashion; or even the plain, plodding man of business, whose thoughts constantly vibrate between the office or shop, in which his profits are made, and the table and the bed where his body is to be fed and refreshed.

What think or care they for the endless life which the soul must lead in another state of being? What preparation or sacrifice do they make, that it may be a happy one? None! And still God's word, and ministers, and ordinance, and the chastisements which He sends, are all telling them that the future must be thought of; that one hour of penitence and prayer is worth whole years of exertion after any worldly good; that the interests of the soul *ought not* to be slighted; that the bliss of heaven is too precious to be squandered, and the misery of hell to be endured.

A lost soul! Who can tell the meaning of those words? Health may be thrown away, and the constitution shattered; but air and exercise, and the physician's skill, blessed by God's healing power, may restore them both.

Property may be lost; but industry and prudence may more than make it up to us again. Friends may

become estranged, or die, and others will rise up in their stead.

But the soul once lost, is lost *forever*. The person who suffers this irreparable misfortune has none but himself to blame. The voice of wretchedness, from the gloomy regions of despair, will repeat through long, lingering years, the remorseful but unavailing lament: "I did it; it was my own act. I bartered my soul!"

It is passing strange with what cool indifference the most solemn warnings from God are received by hardened and impenitent sinners. They do not manifest as much concern about it, as they would in a paragraph in a newspaper, or the floating gossip of the street.

The occupations of Monday drive away the sober thoughts which the duties of the Lord's day may have excited. While the services are going on, they sometimes seem interested. The sermon may strike them as being truthful, and as suggesting topics worthy of regard.

While the concluding prayer is offered, they will, perhaps, bow their stubborn necks, and resolve that the week just entered upon, shall be well and wisely spent. They may even have some serious though indefinite intention of uniting with the church. Like a poor, shipwrecked one, buffeting with the waves, and stretching out his hands with confidence toward a floating board or beam, they may fancy themselves

almost safe within the Ark, when the sweeping, all-engrossing cares of life come rushing back, and bear them far away.

There are those who are foolish enough to suppose that they can be joined to God by the mere exercise of their thoughts. But what saith the Scripture? "*As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.*" "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of God, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*"

Until the ordinances appointed by our blessed Saviour have been reverently received, we have not entered into covenant with God. Should you willfully refuse to embrace the privileges so freely offered to you, and die in this condition, the largest stretch of charity could offer no ray of hope.

You might as well expect to claim insurance for the loss of a house, because you *intended* to take out a policy, as to look for the mercy of God, when you stubbornly neglected his reasonable requirements.

In endeavoring to protect your property from danger by fire and flood, you would go to the authorized agents. So God's ministers are to be consulted in reference to the well-being of the soul.

I do not mean, of course, that sacraments, or ministers, or any thing, can stand between the sinner and his Saviour; but these instrumentalities are appointed by God, and they are not to be undervalued nor despised.

Why delay longer to seek and find the mercy and

grace of God? Most of you are skillful in calculating loss and gain when worldly considerations are concerned. Solve this problem, then, and let the answer prompt you how to act: "*What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

SERMON X.

TRUSTFULNESS.

Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in THEE.—
PSALM lvi. 3.

WHO does not envy the trustfulness of a little child, clinging fast to a father's hand, when threatening dangers thicken about the way, and saying to himself, no matter how terrible the storm: "My father is with me, and I am safe!"

Such is the unfailing confidence which all true believers have in the power and goodness of their FATHER in Heaven. Of course, with depression of spirits, or times of weakness and sickness, or when overtaken by unlooked-for misfortunes, there may be slight waverings, and even a momentary forgetfulness that they have such a tower of strength on which they may securely rest; but soon the season of despondency will be past; and while looking up with the smile of hope and love, to that great and gracious Being, who is about our bed and path, and who watches over all our ways, the full and grateful heart will find utterance in the confiding language of the text: "Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in THEE."

The Bible abounds in precious promises, setting forth the reasonableness of such confidence. "Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust." Psalm xl. 4. "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe." Proverbs xxix. 25. "The Lord delivereth the souls of his servants; and all they that put their trust in Him shall not be destitute." Psalm xxxiv. 22. "Put thou thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Psalm xxxvii. 3. "They that put their trust in the Lord, shall be even as the Mount Sion, which can not be removed, but standeth fast forever." Psalm cxxv. 1.

I need hardly stop to give you further proofs. Oh, how gracious are such assurances of the particular providence of God, for those who have enroled themselves among his people!

Christians lose a great source of consolation and happiness, whenever they forget the fact that the eye of their heavenly Father is always over them for good, and that his attentive ear is ever open to their prayers. Aye, they are guilty of a *wrong* by this heedlessness. It is not merely showing a want of faith in God, who is able and willing to do for them exceedingly abundantly above all that they can ask or think, but they are actually robbing themselves of comfort in their distresses, and relief from dangers, which they have only to pray for in order to secure.

I shall venture to offer some familiar illustrations of the text.

I. People are oftentimes oppressed by poverty, or perplexed with business, and now and then sadly at a loss what they had best do next.

Instead of becoming downcast and disheartened, and turning sour looks upon the world, and every thing about them, they should remember that they have a Father above who can show them what to do, and who can bless them in every honest endeavor to seek and secure success.

They have only to kneel down and pray in faith, and the answer of peace will be returned.

It is God who giveth men power to get wealth. It is He who will grant even the good things of this life to such as diligently seek him.

II. Again. Every day of our lives we are exposed to accidents and death. Move about as carefully as we please, the delicate machinery which makes up this bodily fabric, may, from the slightest cause, become suddenly and seriously deranged, and our vital breath be stopped. The very superabundance of health increases our peril of death. And then, if we travel about on horseback, or in carriages, or in the swiftest conveyance which modern ingenuity has contrived, the dangers multiply, and the chances of safety become less and less.

And again. When those deep mutterings are heard in the heavens above, and the face of the sun is

darkened, and the swift lightnings shoot across the broad expanse, who does not know that one moment's time may put an end to his earthly existence?

Who has not felt alarmed in such seasons of danger, and wished, with all his heart, that he could claim the great God as his friend? Blessed, thrice blessed is the man who has made the Lord the ground of his hope, and the portion of his soul.

Let dangers come upon him in their most terrible array, the experience of Israel's king will be realized by every Christian heart: "Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in THEE!"

III. Again. Accidents not unseldom happen, which seem at first very great misfortunes, and cause us to distrust the goodness of God; but afterward light breaks in upon the darkness, and we discover that these very afflictions have been working for our good.

An instance occurs to my mind, which took place during bloody Mary's reign. The great and good Bernard Gilpin, whose self-denying and successful labors in the upper districts of England procured for him the title of "the Apostle of the North," when exposed to losses or troubles, was accustomed to say: "Ah, well, God's will be done; nothing happens that is not intended for our good: it is all for the best."

In the midst of Mary's persecutions, this good clergyman was accused of heresy; and being seized at once, and dragged away for trial, he took an affec-

tionate leave of his friends, fully expecting to die at the stake. On the way to London, he accidentally broke his leg, which, for a time, delayed the journey.

His enemies, unmoved by his patience under suffering, now took occasion to retort upon him his habitual remark. "What!" said they, "is this all for the best? You say, master, that nothing happens which is not for our good. Think you that your broken leg is so intended?"

"Sirs, I make no question but it is," was his meek reply. And so it really turned out; for before he was able to travel, Queen Mary died, the persecution ceased, and he was set at liberty.

IV. Again. The blessedness of having a sure trust in God is often experienced in the moment of extreme peril.

A ship is in the midst of a terrible storm. The rudder can no longer direct her course. The angry waves are dashing over the deck, and water is fast rising in the hold. Cries of terror and anguish are heard on every hand. There is only one step between these unhappy voyagers and death.

This is a scene from real life. When hope had given way to utter despair, many ran to a clergyman on board, and besought him to pray for deliverance.

"Oh, sir," said one, "in this awful crisis (for it seems that prejudice will stick fast to people, even in the very jaws of death) your Prayer Book can be of no service to you."

The man of God made no reply, but fell on his knees, and with a fervor that penetrated every heart, implored mercy, in the solemn words of the Litany.

"O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners."

The effect was wonderful. Tears were in every eye, and all hearts seemed lifted up to God in prayer, that He would save them from a watery grave.

Suddenly the winds were hushed, and the billows ceased to rage. The mighty God, who rides upon the whirlwind and rules the storm, had sent forth His commandment, "Peace, be still!" The prayer of faith received its full reward.

V. Another illustration of the text may be found in the encouragement which a sure trust in God's un-failing goodness affords to His people, in the midst of anxieties about the events of the future.

"What if my house should burn down, or my health should fail?" asks one. "What if my business should prove unsuccessful?" inquires another.

And so questions, most perplexing and important, will multiply, until one feels that his chances even

of food and clothing, for himself and those dependent on him, are by no means certain.

What a relief, therefore, in such embarrassments and troubles, to be able to say: "My Father in heaven is both rich and great. He is the possessor of all things. I will put my trust in Him, and I shall not want."

VI. Again. We must all look forward to the time when every earthly tie will be severed, and every domestic relation, however sacred, broken up forever.

What sad havoc the relentless Destroyer will make with our earthly bliss!

O, thou hateful and abhorred Death! How wilt thine eyes gloat and glisten when, in those abodes of peace, scattered through this town, in which, night by night, goodly companies are gathered for festivity and mirth, the minister of God stands up, in the robes of his office, to read the moving service for the burial of the dead; and down the same steps where the happy group of father, and mother, and sons, and daughters sit at eventide, the coffin, covered with its pall of woe, shall be slowly borne!

But blessed be God, even in the prospect of such calamities as this, though, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we are "sometimes afraid," yet do we "put our trust" in HIM. His grace will be sufficient for us.

O Death, we can face thee boldly now ; for He who is the Destroyer of Death will give us the victory.

VII. And finally, we realize still more vividly the exceeding blessedness of a sure trust in God, when we contemplate our own departure from the world.

People may talk as they please about their willingness to die, but it is quite natural for us to shrink back at the approach of the pale Messenger. Such impressions in regard to death, which God's own children, as well as others, are sensible of, are designed to fill their minds with a holy and salutary fear, and to lead them to make due preparation for the close of life.

My friends, it is far better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man. My trust is in the tender mercy of God forever and ever.

O ye, who have been endeavoring to satisfy the thirst of an immortal spirit at the broken cisterns of worldliness, "*taste and see how gracious the Lord is : blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. They who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.*"

SERMON XI.

THE RICH FOOL.

God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? —ST. LUKE xii. 20.

WHEN the pedantic King James the First proposed on a certain occasion to grant a coat-of-arms to one of his favorites, it was attempted in the College of Heraldry to introduce Time and Eternity, as supporters in the seal. The only difficulty in the way was to find some device for representing *Eternity*.

A quiet, but most severe rebuke upon the short-sightedness of man, was given by the king's jester, who suggested that Eternity be made twice as much as Time.*

It is well for us to hear the whole truth sometimes; and God has kindly ordered it that we *shall* hear it now and then, whether we are disposed or not.

The rich and the great are sometimes foolish enough to fancy that they are protected from unpleasant and

* The scene is graphically described in Scott's "Fortunes of Nigel," vol. ii. chap. xx.

painful things of every sort by the wall of separation which divides their lot from that of others.

But if mortal man is afraid to give them warning, and tell them of the vanity of trusting in wealth and worldly pomp, there is ONE whose voice of thunder they cannot fail to hear.

To every person who is now building his hopes on temporal things alone, and living unmindful of all beyond the present hour, God is saying, as to the man in the parable of old, "*Thou fool, this night thy soul may be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*"

The particular sin which our Saviour had in view was *covetousness*.

It will be worth our while to go over the parable in detail. I shall only premise that all are to be accounted *rich*, relatively speaking, who have more than enough for their actual necessities, and who could bestow a larger portion than they do upon the poor, if they felt disposed.

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." We sometimes say of "*lucky* people," as the world calls them, that every thing they touch is turned to gold.

This is no sin. The rich man cannot be blamed because of the fruitfulness of his land. This prosperous condition, however, exposes him to temptation.

Solomon long ago declared, that "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." Prov. i. 32.

With good reason did the Psalmist give warning to those whose worldly affairs are in a favorable train for success. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Psalm lxii. 10.

The parable now draws back the curtain, and we are permitted to inspect the mind of one who is rejoicing over his abundance, and who is only anxious to make "provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

It is seldom that we can feel sure that we know a man's *thoughts*. His *words* do not always express them.

The foolish rich man is thinking aloud. Listen. "He thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?"

A sad perplexity, indeed! He had more than he knew what to do with. He showed an over-anxiety about his worldly wealth in the little question, "What shall I do?"

He had more than enough to feed and clothe himself and his family, for the entertainment of his guests, and for the support of that becoming appearance in the world to which his station entitled him.

Proper thoughtfulness about these things would not have been wrong. He must have kept his eyes shut, however, not to be able to think of any convenient and useful way to dispose of the superfluity which he did not actually need. Had he been somewhat less

selfish, he might have discovered deserving objects of charity among the suffering poor. There must have been hungry persons to be fed, naked to be clothed, and ignorant ones to be taught. He might, also, have contributed a larger share toward the support and the spread of religion. These, and other channels of benevolence, would have readily suggested themselves to his mind, if he had been at all disposed to do right.

His tone and language show plainly enough that his sole object was to grasp every thing for himself. He talks of "*My* fruits," and "*My* goods."

He is still thinking aloud. We may sometimes gather instruction even from the words of a fool.

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods."

His granaries held abundance already to supply every reasonable want. Still he is not satisfied, and must reach forth after more. Like many foolish rich men of these later times, he could fix no limit to his desires.

In their poverty, people think that the possession of a certain moderate sum would render them contented and happy. Give them this amount, and their desires have doubled. Instead of taking the increase of wealth as an evidence that God wishes them to act as His stewards, and to use it for His glory, they be-

gin to look out for new chances of profitable investment, and for larger sources of gain.

O, the curse of covetousness! How it eats all the humanity out of our nature, and leaves nothing but the feelings of the brute.

Who can greatly blame the suffering poor, who mock at the misfortunes of the miserly rich!

It is said that, some hundred years ago, there was a scarcity of corn in Egypt, and the people were daily perishing of want. Still, some avaricious merchants hoarded up their stock until it became worth its weight in gold.

Among these was an old miser, who had filled a granary at the last plenteous harvest. Day by day, as the famine wasted his fellow-men, he sat upon the steps of his store-house, speculating on their sufferings, and contriving how he could make the utmost usury out of God's bounty.

At length there was no more corn elsewhere; famishing crowds surrounded his granary, and besought him, as a charity, to give them a little food for all their wealth. Gold was piled around him; the miser's soul was satisfied with the prospect of boundless riches.

Slowly he unclosed his iron doors, but recoiled, terror-stricken, from his treasures. Heaven had sent the worm into his corn; and, instead of piles of yellow grain, he gazed on festering masses of rottenness and corruption. Starving as the people were, they raised

a shout of triumph; but the miser heard it not. He had perished in his hour of evil pride.*

But we must not interrupt the foolish rich man again. He thus closes his soliloquy:

"I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

We are not told what form of religion he professed. He may have been orthodox in his *faith*—in *conduct*, he was an *atheist*.

He lived only to enjoy himself. He did not deserve to be trusted with a *soul*. It would have been bad enough to address such words to his sensual *body*.

Considering that his life, like that of every mortal, was "as a vapor," fleeting and uncertain, it was rather presumptuous to be promising himself long "*years*" of happiness.

Men may add house to house, and field to field; they may, as they fondly trust, have "much goods laid up for *many years*"; they may speak and act as if they felt certain that such would be the case—but the end may be far otherwise than they wish.

The vision of happiness upon which the rich man in the parable had been feasting his imagination, was soon scattered forever.

"God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul

* This incident is taken, with some abbreviations and verbal alterations, from Warburton's "*Crescent and Cross*," p. 107.

shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

"*Thou fool!*" Such is the humiliating title applied to one who persuaded himself that he was supremely wise.

"*This night,*" this very night, as opposed to the many years he had taken it for granted that he should enjoy.

"*Thy soul shall be required of thee!*" Whether willing or unwilling, prepared or unprepared, He who has power over soul and body shall force thee to loose thy hold on life.

Observe the withering sarcasm in the closing words: "Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

They will be his no longer. "He heapeth up riches," says David, "and cannot tell who shall gather them."

"I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun, (is the vain lamentation which Solomon puts into the mouth of one who had delighted himself in the multitude of his riches); I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it to the man that shall be after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool." Eccles. ii. 18, 19.

The enlarged barns may have been built, the granaries overflow, the gold and silver are heaped up—

but what use are they to him *then*? "This night" his soul is summoned to its great account.

There would be excitement enough, no doubt, on the morning after so startling an event. The whole household would be in confusion and dismay; the children and servants alarmed beyond measure, and scarcely venturing to look into the darkened chamber of sudden death.

The tidings would soon be spread. Every one would look solemn at the moment. But, ere long, the undertaker, with his cool, business manner, appears to make preparations for the burial. The body is laid out in state, and then the grave hides it from human view.

Within a few hours' space, the tale has ceased to interest or disturb. No one seems much to care. Why *should* they? The covetous rich man had done no good in life. Who could be expected to wish or to pray that his days might be prolonged? What would the world be the better for his living, or the worse for his final removal?

The inscription upon his tomb might be flattering in the extreme; but even the engraver who was paid for putting it there, would laugh at its untruthfulness.

The conclusion which our Saviour gives to the parable, shows that others, besides this one individual, should share in his miserable doom: "So is he that

layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The soul must make its choice. If it shall determine for *self*, we have seen the end which it must certainly expect. If *God* be its choice; then, at death, instead of *leaving* riches, it goes to *inherit* riches—enduring riches—in that treasure-house above, where there is no danger of failure, and no possibility of loss.

"There was a certain nobleman," says the quaint Bishop Hall, "who kept a jester, to whom he one day gave a staff, with a charge to keep it till he should meet with one who was a greater fool than himself. Not many years after the nobleman fell sick, even unto death. The fool came to see him. His sick lord said to him, 'I must shortly leave you.'

"And whither art thou going?" said the fool.

"Into another world," was the reply.

"And when will you come again? Within a month?"

"No."

"Within a year?"

"No."

"When then?"

"Never."

"Never!" said the fool; "and what provision hast thou made for thy entertainment there?"

"None at all."

"No!" said the fool; "none at all! Here, take my

staff, for, with all my folly, I am not guilty of such folly as this.'"

Can any of you be accused of like want of consideration and forethought? Is any one caring mainly for self, and thus stinting the church of her rights, and neglecting the poor? To you the voice of God may be saying now, leaving you scarcely any time in which to make amends for your wrong: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

SERMON XII.

LION-LIKE BOLDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

The righteous are as bold as a lion.—PROV. xxviii., *part of 1st verse.*

WHO are the *righteous*? I might answer, in a single sentence, that they are *those who do right*.

This definition would be true, without regard to sect, or party, or race, or nation. Every one who does right, be he pagan or barbarian bond or free, is righteous.

The good, plain Saxon of righteous, is *right wise*.

But the text is taken from the Bible; and here we must look for light to guide us in determining upon the correctness of the definition which common sense has suggested.

Before man had fallen, and the taint of original sin had left its indelible mark upon us, the righteous were those who were conformed, in all respects, to the known will of God.

Such righteousness implied a blameless walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

But now, as fallen creatures, none can claim to be

righteous, according to the strict requirements of the Law.

We find, however, that even after Adam's transgression, some individuals are spoken of in Scriptural history, in a *comparative* sense, as righteous. Thus, Noah is called righteous; and Abraham supposed (a woeful mistake, to be sure!) that there might be fifty righteous persons in wicked Sodom.

Compared with their neighbors, who are outrageously bad, and who sin without compunction or remorse, there are many who may be called righteous. St. James speaks of this class as living in the world in his time, when, as now, there was no question of the fact that the earnest "prayers of a righteous man" availed much with God.*

But while we must acknowledge that, in the limited sense just given to the words, there have *always* been righteous persons, let us never forget the great and fundamental truth which is set forth in our Eleventh Article of religion, that "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith." So much for the description of persons mentioned in the text.

A *certain quality* is here ascribed to them.—"The righteous are *as bold as a lion*."

It is noteworthy how often, in the Bible, the particular characteristics of the lower orders of creation

* Genesis vii. 1-9; Genesis xviii. 23; and St. James v. 16.

are referred to, as affording a model for us. Thus, our blessed Saviour bids His disciples imitate the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove. He himself is described as a gentle and unresisting lamb. And again he appears, in the Revelation of St. John, as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.*

So, too, in the text, "the righteous" are represented as possessing the boldness of the king of beasts.

"*As bold as a lion*" seems to have been a proverb from ancient times. "This noble animal is the most perfect model of boldness and courage. He never flees from the hunters, nor is frightened by their onset. If their number forces him to yield, he retires slowly, step by step, frequently turning upon his pursuers. He has been known to attack a whole caravan; and, when obliged to retire, he always retires fighting, and with his face to the enemy."†

One of the bravest of the kings of England is known, to this day, as Richard *the lion-hearted*.

And well may the unflinching courage of the lion be mentioned as a distinguishing mark of the righteous, who can only be what the name imports by being *bold*.

I. Boldness is indispensable at the very *beginning* of the Christian course.

* St. Matthew x. 17; Isaiah liii. 7; and Rev. v. 5.

† "Paxton's Illustrations of Natural History of Scripture," p. 295.

When we are commanded, by a voice from Heaven, to come out and be separate from the evil world, and, by Baptism and Confirmation, to declare openly and unreservedly that we have chosen the service of God, does it require no boldness to *obey* the call?

Let those answer who have gone through with the painful struggle which it costs, before the mind can be brought to take this decided stand.

Let those answer who, although as thoroughly convinced as we are, that such solemn obligations should be faithfully discharged, are yet lacking in the *courage* which must prompt them to act.

Aye, it *does* require the "boldness of the lion" to declare, before men and angels, that we are not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and to engage manfully to fight under His banner against the enemies of our salvation.

II. Again. Boldness is required in the discharge of the duties which must be met day by day.

What bright examples have been placed before us in the lives of the saints of God!

Moses, meek and mild as he was, possessed the bravery of a hero, and "feared not the wrath of the king."

Caleb and Joshua resolutely stood their ground against the sweeping current of rebellion. Elijah dared King Ahab's anger to his face. David exclaims, with holy reliance on the protection of the

Almighty: "Though an host of men should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear."

We read of the boldness of Peter and John, in the Jewish Sanhedrim—a boldness which cost them stripes and a dungeon.

We are told, again, that "Paul and Barnabas waxed bold," and proclaimed to unwilling ears the truth concerning Christ and the church, in the synagogue at Antioch.

St. Paul, who showed no lack of boldness whenever occasion called it forth, begged* the prayers of Christian friends for a larger measure of this gift, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly"; and again, "that I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

Examine the history of the martyrs and confessors of the church, reaching back to the early days of Christianity, and see how, in every age, the same lion-like boldness has inspired them all, giving them strength to stand unmoved in the presence of rulers and kings, to witness a good confession before an unbelieving world, to make light of suffering and reproach, to chant songs of triumph amidst the horrors of the dungeon, and to rejoice, in their grievous afflictions, for Jesus' sake.

See Athanasius before the imperial council of

* Hebrews xi. 27; Numbers xiv. 6-10; 1 Kings xviii. 10, &c.; Psalm xxvii. 1-3; Acts iv. 13, and xiii. 46; Ephesians vi. 20, 21.

heresy. Watch those two gray-haired Bishops at the stake, braving the fury of the flames, rather than adopt the false doctrines of Rome. "Be of good courage, master Ridley (cried out Hugh Latimer, from his fiery furnace), and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

There are more private occasions, with nothing to render their words or deeds peculiarly notorious, when the righteous should be bold. St. Mark records (xv. 43) an instance of the sort, when, after our Saviour had been spit upon, and reviled, and crucified as a guilty offender, he says that Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, risked his reputation and his life, and went "boldly unto Pilate," and begged the body of Jesus for decent burial.

Those brave souls are now acting the same noble part who, in these days of blasphemy and rebuke, are not afraid to show favor to God's children who may be under a cloud of reproach, and trodden under foot by the mighty.

And again, in more ordinary matters still, the same boldness is indispensable.

How true to the life is a little notice which I lately saw in a letter from a good Missionary among our Indian tribes:

"It is a pleasing spectacle," he says, "to behold groups of Red-men coming up to the church toward evening, when their work is over, to learn to pray.

They kneel for both silent and vocal prayer. To do so at first was a sore trial to the poor Indians. They always encountered ridicule when they did so; and this is the most powerful weapon to gain a point, or frighten those who would make a change for the better. Now, the man or woman who refuses to kneel in the church, is the rare exception."

Would to God that the same could be said of all who live in Christian lands, and enjoy the privileges of the Gospel!

Surely there is but little of the lion's boldness in the character of those who, while members of Christ's body by holy Baptism, fed and protected by the mercy of God, and looking to the merits of His blessed Son to save them, are afraid to kneel down and confess Him as their master.

Oh, it is a lamentable truth, that there are too many *Christians* who are not *righteous*! The one word should imply the other; but, alas! it is not so.

III. Once more. The boldness of the righteous is manifested at the approach of death.

There is something in human nature which instinctively shrinks back at the thought of dissolution. The best of Christians have shared in the emotions of awful solemnity which attend the coming of death. But when the righteous man actually draws near the border line which divides time from eternity, no matter what his apprehension may have been before, the fear of death is gone.

"Tell those that are approaching the bed of death," says one,* "from my experience, that it has no terrors; that in the hour of death, when it is most wanted, there is mercy with the Most High; and that some change takes place which fits the soul to meet its God."

"I, a poor, weak, timorous man," exclaims another,† "once as much afraid of death as any—I, that have been many years under the terror of death, come now, in the mercy of God, and by the power of his grace, composedly and with joy, to look death in the face."

There is, indeed, "*dying grace kept for a dying hour.*"

Several ways have now been pointed out in which God's people will exhibit becoming boldness; and it has seemed the more proper to do so, inasmuch as a spirit of cowardice is creeping over the Christian world, palsying the energies of believers, and causing the enemy to rejoice.

Let us all aim at being something more than Christians in *name*. Let us cultivate the *decision*, the *boldness*, and the *endurance*, which our profession demands.

When tempted in any way by that despicable "fear of man which bringeth a snare," to shrink back from duty, or to deny the least principle of the faith, let each Christian soul say to himself, as good Nehemiah did, "Should such a man as I flee?"

* Sir William Forbes.

† Halyburton.

SERMON XIII.

NOT FAR FROM GOD'S KINGDOM.

Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.—ST. MARK xii., *part of 34th verse.*

ANY thing lost by a few moments' delay, and which seemed certainly our own, is generally an occasion of vexation and discontent.

To see a friend riding briskly away, by the time we have reached the door to deliver a parting message; to have the boat push off from the dock, while we are hurrying down to get on board: these small disappointments will serve as illustrations in greater things.

A certain Scribe, who was listening one day to our Saviour's words, was favorably impressed by what he heard; and in a spirit of candor, uncommon among the Jews, proposed some questions, with a view of obtaining additional information.

I need not occupy your time by repeating the conversation.

Our Lord was evidently gratified to meet with such a frank and unprejudiced mind, and kindly remarked: "*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*"

As if he had said: "You have a just idea of the relative value of the inward change which religion effects in the heart, and of the outward manifestation of a devotional spirit in the appointed forms of worship, and but little is lacking to render you a worthy disciple of the MESSIAH."

The expression, "Kingdom of God," is synonymous with the "Kingdom of Heaven." Both refer to the reign of Christ upon earth, and to the final consummation of his glory in Heaven. In other words, to God's universal and everlasting kingdom, the CHURCH.

It was a favorite figure of speech with our blessed Lord, and almost every parable which he delivered, was a likeness or an illustration of this kingdom. And thus it was with reference to the Scribe's fitness for the privileges of the church, that Jesus said to him, in terms of comfort and encouragement, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

The opportunities which people have of knowing their duty, and the use which they make of the mean of grace, determine their relative position with regard to this kingdom. Some are near to it, even at the door, while others stand afar off. They have it in their own power to enter the fold and be safe, or to wander away and perish.

St. Paul describes the case of most of us, when he says: "Ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Ephes. ii. 13.

Among those who are regular in their attendance at church, there are always a goodly number who, although they have never taken any decided stand in regard to religion, evidently have some things in common with Christians, and, to a certain extent, are identified with them. They are "*not far* from the kingdom of God."

I shall bring before you several of these classes.

I. We find many excellent people, whose goodness is of a *negative* kind. By the judicious management and advice of parents and teachers, they have grown up free from the grosser sins, and have escaped the pollutions of the world. They neither swear, nor use intoxicating drinks, nor profane the Lord's day, nor do any thing which (reasoning after the manner of men) you could call positively bad. They think themselves so much better than many professing Christians whom they know, that they take pride in their prudence and self-control, and boast over those who are tempted and fall.

The good habits which they have gained, are the very ones which they would be expected to cultivate as the children of God; and the fact that they have already formed these, smooths the way for their entrance into the church. They are "*not far* from the kingdom of God."

But they must approach nearer than this if they hope to be saved. The church comes to you, in Christ's name, to teach, to guide, and to aid you in your prep-

aration for heaven. While then those who, as in the class just described, by their freedom from the worst forms of evil, are in a hopeful state, because, in this particular, they are not far from God's kingdom, they should remember that now, as in ancient days, the Lord "*adds to the church* such as shall be saved." Acts ii. 47.

II. Another class of persons are fitted, by the character of their minds, and the nature of their studies, to take an interest in Christianity and the Church, from an *intellectual* point of view. The arguments in support of the truth of our holy religion are so strong and convincing, that a mere taste for logical investigation leads some to enter the lists as its champions.

So, too, with the claims of the Church. These can be so plainly proved by Scripture and history, that none who take time for a fair and full investigation of the subject, and who have candor enough to acknowledge that they have hitherto been in the wrong, will fail to be convinced. The more carefully the whole field of inquiry is explored, the more clearly does the light of truth break in upon the mind. One who has taken his stand upon the broad platform of evangelical truth and apostolical order, can put to flight every assailant who rashly ventures to measure weapons with him; and the ruddy David, with a sling, is able to vanquish the giant, proudly marching forth in fancied victory.

Now it may readily be supposed that the very feel-

ing of security which this impenetrable armor gives to the champion of Christianity and the Church, may lead him to deceive himself in matters of the highest moment.

The interest which he manifests is most commendable. His zeal is worthy of imitation. He may not be "far from the kingdom of God."

But let him remember that religion is something more than correctness of intellect and soundness of judgment. It is a life-giving principle, regulating the *will*, as well as directing the *creed*.

III. A third class, who, in disposition and habits, are "not far from the kingdom of God, may be described as the *amiable*. The very signification of the term—*fit to be loved*—shows that their disposition is what every Christian should be anxious to preserve.

Their gentleness of manner, kindness of heart, activity and usefulness, their obliging and cheerful compliance with the wishes of others: how such a disposition is calculated to charm! And so it should.

An individual blessed with this trait of amiability, oftentimes goes further. The honest and devout sentiment of his heart is heard to express itself in the becoming wish: "I *would* be one of God's people!" But he seldom ventures resolutely and decidedly to declare: "I *will* be!"

But all this may be felt and expressed, and still no just idea be entertained of his condition as a helpless

sinner, and of the absolute need of Christ's atonement and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The goodness which we discover and admire in the amiable man or woman, does not extend so far. But the reformation of our poor, corrupt nature, must reach the *heart*. Mere amiability is not enough. Religion is more than this. It implies repentance, and faith, and obedience.

Many, who belong to the class of amiable persons, have not even been baptized. In various attractive and lovable traits of character, they are not far from God's kingdom; but until they submit to this ordinance of Christ, they are not *in* the kingdom; and without discharging this obligation, and the duties which follow it, they have no promise of its blessings.

IV. One other class which I shall speak of, as embracing many "not far from the kingdom of God," is that of the *generous and liberal spirited*.

Close-fisted parsimony disgusts. Kind, whole-souled benevolence wins favor and love. But this, alone, is not religion. True enough, a Christian, destitute of generosity, is a poor, unprofitable creature, undeserving of his name.

There are, perhaps, quite as many kind, unselfish people out of the Church as in it. This is a sad reproach to Christians. At the same time, however, it does not prove that mere generosity will save the soul. What says St. Paul? "Though I bestow *all*

my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity"—or true Christian love—"it will profit me nothing."

During the rage of the pestilence in one of our large cities, when persons of every rank and grade, who could possibly get away, were fleeing for their lives, an avowed unbeliever heroically staid behind, and tenderly nursed the sick and fed the poor. This was most praiseworthy. We feel disposed to overlook a great deal that was wrong in such a man, for the sake of the good which he did; and we hope that God will not be extreme to mark his misdoings.

The spirit which this person exhibited was most assuredly in accordance with the teachings of Christianity. It was the active, earnest, unselfish disposition, which we are all expected to cultivate.

Unbeliever though he was, yet, in *this* particular, and that a very important one, he set a good example to Christians. We might even say, that so far as this manifestation of kind-heartedness and humanity was concerned, that he was "not far from the kingdom of God."

But the great fact remains unchanged by such circumstances as this, that with the opportunity to do so, we are obliged to come within the bounds of this kingdom, if we desire to secure God's favor, and to receive His largest blessings.

Such startling statements should set people to thinking, and make them afraid of remaining in a condition

where they have no claim to the covenanted promises of God.

Some of you must know that you yourselves are "*not far* from the kingdom of God." But, I beseech you, do not continue to occupy this uncertain and unprofitable position, when it is quite possible for you to obey the commandments of Him whose yoke is easy and His burden light.

We read of benighted travelers, benumbed with cold, lying down to die in sight of their homes.

There, in the distance, is the smoke rising from the chimney, and the cheering light, as it shines through the casement, betokens the comfort which a little more exertion would enable them to reach. But too much strength has been wasted in unavailing pursuits. The short, intermediate space seems now an impassable gulf.

Oh, what a bitter disappointment to those "not far from the kingdom of God," to perish within sight of that HOME!

SERMON XIV.

THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT.—WHITSUNDAY.

The love of the Spirit.—ROMANS xv., *part of 80th verse.*

FOR hundreds of years, the great feast of WHITSUNDAY has been everywhere kept by the Christian church, with anthems, and songs, and the celebration of the blessed Sacrament.

JESUS had foretold the coming of a COMFORTER, when he himself should leave the world. How anxiously must the disciples have watched and waited, wondering who this Comforter could be! Some looked, no doubt, for an angelic message. Some for a prophet, like those which had appeared before. Some for a lawgiver greater than Moses. After ten days of unavailing conjecture and earnest hope, the promise was fulfilled. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST." Acts ii. 2-4.

The text will direct our thoughts into a proper channel for the anniversary of this wonderful event.

"THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT."

Each person of the blessed Trinity bears a part in the recovery and salvation of our race. The FATHER'S love first devised the plan. It was the infinite mercy of the SON OF GOD which prompted him to sanctify our nature by taking it unto himself.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, the Lord and Giver of life, being of one substance, majesty and glory with the FATHER and the SON, unites us to Christ, the Divine head of the church, and imparts to the appointed means of grace their peculiar efficacy.

"The *love* of the SPIRIT" is manifested in the ample provision which He makes for the well-being of mankind, and for the special attention bestowed upon each individual case.

By the influence of the HOLY GHOST, the first apostles were fitted for their work. HE bestowed upon them wisdom and strength. Whether their gifts and endowments consisted in steadiness of faith, in the ability to work miracles or to preach the Gospel in diverse languages, all were derived from the "One and the selfsame SPIRIT, dividing to every man severally as He will." 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Enlightened and instructed by Him, the Evangelists and Apostles wrote the books of the New Testament. Through his Divine agency, an unbroken succession of pastors and teachers has been raised up for the perfecting of those who have become followers of Christ, and for building up of his kingdom upon earth.

Great and glorious as this work of the HOLY SPIRIT is, His love is still more plainly seen in the gracious influences which He exerts upon *each individual* who does not drive him off by willful and long neglect.

I. The HOLY GHOST was sent to "*convince the world of sin.*" Reading and persevering study may make one master of the most abstruse points of theology. He may have weapons at command to ward off every hostile foe who would besiege the citadel of his faith.

But what is all this worth, unless the Spirit of God shall open the eyes of his understanding, that he may know how to apply the Scriptures to his own case, unless he is shown the corruption of his nature, and his alienation from God; unless his self-righteousness and pride give place to humbleness of mind; unless his stubborn will be brought to yield itself to the law of HIM who has the fullest claim upon the love and obedience of those whom he has made, preserved, and redeemed?

II. "The *love* of the SPIRIT" is further manifested in consenting to take up his abode in the heart thus prepared to receive him, and in discharging the office of SANCTIFIER. The youth who is brought to feel the need of giving up his idle habits, and of bending the whole energies of his mind to study, can no more be considered a finished scholar at the outset, than the person can be said to be a *perfect* Christian, who has merely put himself in the way of becoming so.

A deep sense of sin, and a settled determination to

forsake it, are only the first steps in a long course of self-discipline and obedience.

The power of inborn corruption is to be overcome. The snares of the Evil One are to be resisted. Habits of holiness must be formed. We shall soon enough discover that our own strength, our own watchfulness, our own anxiety to do right, will not enable us to accomplish all this.

The DIVINE SPIRIT of God—the “Sanctifier of the faithful,” must be constantly and fervently invoked. HE “helpeth our infirmities.” We “live in the SPIRIT.” We “walk in the SPIRIT.” Love, and joy, and peace, and long-suffering, and gentleness, and goodness, and faith, and meekness, and temperance, are the fruits which HE enables us to bring forth, to the glory of God’s name.

III. “The *love* of the SPIRIT” also works within us such a change of character and habits, that God the Father looks upon us with favor, as his redeemed children.

In this sense he is called the SPIRIT of *adoption*. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”—“The SPIRIT beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”*

Before this adoption, we had no claim upon the care and goodness of the Almighty. Out of pure kindness

* Romans viii. 26. Galatians v. 25; v. 16; and v. 22. Romans viii. 14-16.

and compassion, the HOLY SPIRIT has brought us into a new and holy relation to him,

IV. Again. "The *love* of the SPIRIT" is displayed in teaching us to make known our wants in prayer, and to ask with undoubting confidence.

The blessed REDEEMER is robbed of no glory in ascribing these offices to the HOLY GHOST. *His* sufferings and death alone secured the benefits of the Spirit's agency to man. "It is *his* SPIRIT"; hence we read of "the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus," not only by reason of the essential union which subsists between the persons of the Godhead, but because the right of bestowing it was granted Him in the covenant of redemption.

While, therefore, the merits of the SAVIOUR must be the only ground of hope, in presenting our supplications to the FATHER, it is the SPIRIT who teaches us to pray. "Through Christ we both have access by one SPIRIT unto the FATHER."—"We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the SPIRIT itself maketh intercession for us. . . . And He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the SPIRIT; because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."*

V. Again. Unless we persist in resisting His gracious influences, the Holy Spirit will renew and change each sinful soul into the image of God.

* Philip. i. 19; Ephes. ii. 18; and Romans viii. 26.

There will, indeed, be no formal type in which the personal qualities of Christians will be cast. "The HOLY SPIRIT," as has been well remarked, "does not destroy the natural, individual characteristics of the man, nor work a living being into a living likeness, nor mere passive matter into a dead, unvarying mould. Thus, in human frames, we see the general likeness to the one original type, while yet there are as many specific peculiarities as there are individuals. Thus, too, though the sun is one, and every dew-drop is a globule, and every globule reflects the sun's one image, yet there is ever with each reflection a new combination of colors, and rainbow hues glitter on every side."

St. Paul had a similar thought in his mind, when he said, that "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Not that all are influenced alike, or make equal advancement in holiness. This will depend upon our disposition, our opportunities, and the diligence with which they are improved.

VI. "The *love* of the SPIRIT" fails not for any trifling cause; but if we show ourselves ready to be enlightened, and guided aright, He will continue his kind offices until death.

At our Confirmation, the Bishop beseeches God to strengthen us "with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter,

and to increase" within us "his manifold gifts of grace."

Although we do not claim that *miraculous* gifts are imparted in this holy rite, yet even those who have presented themselves with too little reflection upon the important step which they were about to take, have felt afterward that the hand of the Almighty was stretched out over them, and that His good SPIRIT was gently leading them to the knowledge and obedience of His holy word.

VII. Nor will "the *love* of the SPIRIT" end with *this* life. By His quickening influences we shall all be raised up from the grave. It is true our blessed Saviour is "the resurrection and the life"; but as the Holy Ghost is now left in His stead, to govern and instruct the church, so, at the last day, the Divine Spirit will be His agent to raise the dead. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Romans viii. 11.

More than this. It is the "SPIRIT and the bride," or church, who invite us to share in the glories of a better world. The Spirit of grace and holiness shall there be ever present, and universally diffused. "The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Romans xiv. 17.

If "the love of the SPIRIT" be thus clearly manifested toward creatures who have shown themselves

so undeserving of his notice, ought we not to be most careful not to vex nor grieve Him? Ought we not to endeavor to obey the commands of God, as soon as his will is known?

Some of you, doubtless, have had more serious thoughts at one time than another. You have felt your minds less disposed to wander in prayer. You have listened with more interest to the sermon. You have been almost persuaded to attempt the discharge of some long-neglected duty.

In such cases the SPIRIT of God has been striving with you.

And shall this Divine Being show so much interest in your behalf, and you manifest none for yourselves? Shall He convince you of sin, offer to sanctify your evil nature, promise you strength to serve God acceptably, and point to the blessedness of heaven as the reward of faithful obedience, and you draw back and treat His favors with contempt?

I might remind you of the *danger* of following such a course. But the day on which the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to bless the world, is no fitting time for threatenings.

I beseech you, for your own sakes, for the sake of the goodness which God has showed you, for the grace which He is waiting to bestow, no longer treat with an indifference so marked and inexcusable, this "love of the SPIRIT."

SERMON XV.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.—ST. MATTHEW x. 29-31.

WHEN GEORGE WASHINGTON had been graciously preserved amidst the terrible carnage which attended Braddock's defeat, he was not ashamed to leave on record this evidence of his faith:

“By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me.”

His friend, Dr. James Craik, who was with him in the battle, was often afterward heard to say: “I expected every moment to see him fall. Nothing but the superintending care of Providence could have saved him from the fate of all around him.”

Let unbelievers in the special providence of God, listen, also, to the language of the matter-of-fact
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Dr. Franklin, whom no one will suspect of giving the least countenance to vain theories and "old wives' fables."

The Convention was in session at Philadelphia to frame our Federal Constitution. Weeks and weeks had passed, but strife and confusion so far prevailed that no perceptible good was done.

A proposition was then made for daily prayers, and Franklin rose in his place and said: "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers were heard and graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we forgotten this powerful FRIEND? or do we no longer need HIS assistance? I have lived a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men.

"And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings, that 'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concur-

ring aid, we shall succeed no better in this political building, than the builders of Babel."

The proposition for daily prayers, thus earnestly supported, was carried; and we, in this generation, have lived to enjoy the fruit of the Divine blessing, which was bestowed in answer to these supplications.

Alas! is there not reason to fear that we have far less faith than our fathers? Must we indeed invoke the shades of departed patriots and philosophers to shame our unbelief?

The hand of God is recognized, it is true, in a *general* way; but so *very* general, as to make us lose sight of the fact that the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth is a great and powerful Being, presiding as a KING upon the throne of the universe.

Wisdom is certainly a most desirable thing; but if the possession of it must lead us to attempt to banish the Almighty from the care and control of the world which He made, we shall be much better off without it. It would be preferable to believe the earth to be flat, as the ancients did, and the sun a mass of liquid flame, than to cherish one lingering doubt of the all-pervading influence of God's providence.

Contrast the cold, lifeless speculations of blind philosophy with the simple and confiding faith which can lift an unpretentious eye to heaven, and say to HIM who dwells therein:

"In each event of life how clear,
Thy ruling hand I see;
Each blessing to my soul more dear,
Because conferr'd by THEE."

The Christian knows nothing of accident or chance.
He looks to the true source of all things:

"Times of sickness, times of health,
Blighting want and cheerful wealth,
All our pleasures, all our pains,
Come and end as God ordains."

Our Saviour has expressed the whole subject in a single sentence, when he says in the text, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your FATHER." In other words, if the great God who made all things, feels such tender solicitude for the welfare of His creatures, that the smallest and most insignificant of birds, (two being sold for a farthing), is not beneath His notice, need His people be afraid that He will ever lose sight of *them*, in sickness or in health, in poverty or in joy?

A good deal of allowance ought, perhaps, to be made for the skepticism of people on many subjects; for really the religious training of multitudes is so bad, that it is almost surprising that they have true faith in any thing.

But if, from our very childhood, we are taught to regard God as our heavenly Father—a Father who

watches, with anxious eye, all we do, and hears, with ready ear, every request we make, we must always preserve a due reverence for ONE so great, and good, and holy, who is about our path, and about our bed, and who spies out all our ways.

With any other system of education than this, I do not wonder that the doctrine of a particular providence is looked upon with distrust.

Persons of very weak faith can easily understand, or persuade themselves that they can, how the Almighty was present on Mount Sinai, amidst the lightnings and thunderings, and the thick darkness, and the deafening notes of the trumpet. They can imagine how He was present, in power and majesty, at the crucifixion, when the rocks were rent, and the earth was shaken to its centre, and the sheeted dead started up from their graves. They can recognize God's providence here, I say, but when we come to individual cases, then their faith is staggered.

If the minister of God goes into the chamber of sickness, and, kneeling down by the sufferer's bed, beseeches the Great Physician to restore the diseased to health, and he *does* recover, how many, think you, believe for one moment that the prayer which God's servant offered had any thing to do with it? Would not persons who believed themselves to be good Christians, spend their breath in talking of the physician's skill and the nurse's care, without a passing

thought of the special providence of God, invoked by the brayer of faith?

Then, again, during the hot months of Summer, when we have so many frightful storms, and the forked lightning shivers the stately oak, and strikes down man and beast, who ventures to believe that God's watchful care, which keeps us safe, is influenced at all by the fervent petition which we had previously offered up in church, when no danger was nigh at hand—"From lightning and tempest, good Lord deliver us"?

If we take the ideas expressed in the Bible out of the stereotyped forms in which they are imprinted upon our memories, and repeat them in other words, we find it difficult to realize how much God promises to do for us.

Read, for example, our Saviour's plain direction to those in doubtfulness or distress. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." St. Matt. vii. 7.

What is there which is not included here? And yet, if I take this form, and place therein the things I need—bread, and clothes, and friends, and money, and health—and say to my neighbor that I intend to apply to my heavenly Father for them, he would be inclined to think that I was becoming deranged.

But still, this is precisely what our Saviour offers to do—to hear *my* individual prayers for *my* individual wants.

Suppose that a Christian man or woman is sadly pinched for the lack of money, which is really needed for some important end, relating to body or soul. Such a person prays, most earnestly, and in faith, that the deficiency may be supplied. Do you suppose that the money would be found?

I need not wait for an answer elsewhere to sustain *my* faith. I speak what I do know, and testify that which I have seen. God *will* answer such a petition. He will, by His overruling providence, so order human events, that what was needed shall be graciously supplied.

If we settle down into the too common notion, that the machinery of the universe has been wound up, once for all, with a great key, and that things must run on, in one unvarying course, until the end, prayer to God to change this course "must be a sad masquerade, as deficient in taste as it is in ingenuousness. To announce our wants to God cannot be its office; for, to an Infinite Intelligence, they must be already known. Nor, if this doctrine be true, can His knowledge be of any avail. To importune for special blessings, temporal or spiritual, would be superfluous, since those blessings, if they fall within the onward way of unalterable laws, will become ours without prayer—and no prayer can procure them if they do not.

"To exert a persuasive influence on the Divine mind is impossible, since that mind is inexorable.

What, in such a case, would prayer become but a species of pious legerdemain, where, under pretense of pleading with God for that which is no longer His to dispense, we gain the chance of communing with His Spirit, and get grace, not from Him, but by a species of self-development. Were such the Divine government, meditation, not prayer, would befit alike man's estate and God's eternal majesty."*

Ah, my friends, even our own *Christian* land, as we presume to call it, is full of those who entertain such low and loose notions of prayer; and I must say, upon the authority of the Holy Scriptures, that this is nothing but *unbelief—infidelity!*

The merest smatterer in geology ventures to call in question the Mosaic account of the Deluge; and multitudes, who profess better things, smile with incredulity when the doctrine of a special providence is mentioned.

But, for myself, I fearlessly confess, that I believe in the Triune JEHOVAH—the great, the good, the mighty. I look to him for every precious gift in life, and for mercy at the judgment bar. This God shall be *my* God, forever and ever. He shall be *my* Guide unto death.

My friends, shall HE not be *yours* also?

* Bishop Alonzo Potter—"Philadelphia Lectures on Evidences," pp. 146, 147.

SERMON XVI.

THE SAVIOUR TASTING DEATH FOR SINNERS—BEFORE CONFIRMATION.

Jesus . . . who . . . by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.—HEBREWS ii. 9.

TASTING death! A bitter draught indeed!

When Socrates, the wise and good, dwelling amidst the immoralities of Athens, was cruelly condemned to death, he conversed cheerfully with his weeping friends, during the gray and misty hours of morn, concerning the glorious hopes which even he, a poor benighted pagan, had of the soul's long life, and of coming bliss; and then, with untrembling hand, he took the cup of poisonous hemlock, and drank, and died.

The figurative language of the text is borrowed from this common mode of execution in ancient times.

But we read of another who "tasted death," in comparison with whose simple grandeur, Socrates, and all the philosophers and sages who have ever lived, must hide their diminished heads—the incarnate Son of God, who, out of pity and compassion

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for our condemned and suffering race, of His own free-will and goodness, "tasted death *for every man*."

We may suppose—and it would be no picture of the imagination either—that the whole human family were convicted of crime, and condemned to suffer, and that the terrible day had come when all must be led forth from their prison-house, each one holding a deadly cup, which he is required to drink. At this awful moment, the gracious Saviour approaches, and, taking the cups from the guilty offenders one by one, drinks the bitter draught Himself.

Yes, strange and unaccountable as it seems, Jesus has done all this for us. He has "tasted death for every man." And oh, what indescribable agonies that death involved! The foreshadowing of the Crucifixion cast a deep gloom over His rugged and thorny path, long before the end.

When a poor woman, humbled under a sense of sin, drew near the Saviour, and, in token of her penitence and love, anointed Him with precious ointment, He saw, in this simple act, a preparation for His burial.

We stand breathless and awe-struck, while listening to His voice of agony in the garden. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me!"

How can any sinner remain unmoved at the contemplation of such a spectacle?

"*Who tasted death for every man!*" Will *all*, then, be saved?

Most assuredly not. It is true, according to the blessed promises of the Bible, that God "willeth not the death of a sinner," and that Christ Jesus "gave Himself a ransom for *all*," and that "whosoever *will*, may come and take of the water of life freely."

But the same inspired volume describes the Son of Man as the final Judge of quick and dead, who will hereafter be revealed in flaming fire, "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of His Son." 2 Thess. i. 8.

Notwithstanding the plainness with which these truths are set forth, there are some who *profess* to believe otherwise, and very many who *act* as though they were fully persuaded that no future punishment was to be apprehended.

The absurdity of the notion that *all* will finally be *saved*, because Christ *died* for all, was once thus happily exposed, in a chance discussion between two friends.

The advocate for universal salvation complained, that those professing to be orthodox Christians declared his doctrine to be inconsistent with reason.

"I will *prove* it to be so," answered the other. "You believe that Christ died for all, and that all for whom he died will eventually be saved?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"You do not believe there is a hell?"

"No."

"No punishment hereafter?"

"No," answered the advocate of Universalism; "men are punished for their sins in this life."

"Now, put your rational system together, if you can. It is just this, that Christ died to save all men from nothing at all! Not from *hell*, for you say there is none. Not from *punishment* in a future state of being, for man, you insist, receives his whole punishment in this life. Yours is the idle and maniac effort of seeing a man on dry land, in no danger of being drowned, and, at immense expense, throwing to him ropes and life-preservers. Your boasted religion is stark *infidelity*! If you believed the Bible, you would believe as we do."

"*Who tasted death for every man.*" Yes, blessed Saviour, this Thou hast done for us. Thou hast indeed overcome the sharpness of death, and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

A benevolent individual builds a large and comfortable abode for the poor, and the sick, and the helpless, and freely invites everybody who needs to go in at the open gate. The offer of assistance is quite as extensive as the wants of the suffering. But, suppose that some should be too proud to accept of this free mercy, and others should express a doubt whether the physician in the hospital could do any more than might be accomplished by their own silly quackeries at home, will the benefits of the good man's liberality be enjoyed by the proud and the unbelieving?

No more will those be saved who do not go to Christ, even though He *has* died for all.

We must love Him for His goodness, and gladly obey His commandments, if we hope for a share in the blessings purchased by his precious death.

But is this the way with the world? Alas! alas! the course of man is too much after this sort. He plays his part well, perhaps, on the stage of life—well, I mean, in the sense which unthinking mortals put upon the word.

Years pass swiftly by, middle age is over, and the sun begins its decline in the heavens. In the estimation of the *world*, he has reached a venerable and honorable old age. But what is *God's* judgment concerning him?—as one who has wasted his life, and ruined his immortal soul!

Such is the condition of some who are present here to-day. Christ Jesus has “tasted death” for them, and yet they have no right nor title to the benefits of His atonement. They have never considered it worth while to think seriously about religion. They are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. There is a death before them, which, if they persist in this indifference, they too must taste; not temporal agonies alone—the parting asunder of soul and body—but the anguish and remorse of *eternal* death.

All this will come to pass, if those who are *taught* their duty neglect to *do* it.

Now, one part of our obligation is, to acknowledge

our blessed Saviour before the world, and show that we are grateful to Him for "tasting death" for us on the Cross.

• In the Episcopal Church, such a confession is made in the holy rite of Confirmation.

• Jesus asks no *payment* from us in return for what He has done—for what recompense could we make? But He *does* expect obedience and love; and those of our people who have obedience and love, will come to the Bishop for a blessing.

"What! shall we be confirmed in our sins?" I have sometimes heard it asked by those who did not wish to do their duty, and who were glad to take advantage even of a shabby and unsatisfactory excuse for neglecting it.

I suppose so, my friends. I have never yet seen any who were not sinners when they came.

If we feel ashamed and sorry for our misdoings, and are willing to try, by God's help, to break off from our evil ways, we are in the proper frame of mind for Confirmation.

I greatly fear lest some here present, for whom Jesus "tasted death," will not be welcomed by Him hereafter as the purchase of His blood. If you ask me *why*, this is my answer:

I see persons of both sexes who know well enough that God is calling them, by His ministers and by the ordinances of the church, and by the strivings of the Spirit, to receive the offers of salvation while they

may, but who are too proud, or thoughtless, or self-willed, to care whether they are called or not. For the safety of such, have I not good reason to be afraid?

Then, again, I see parents who, at the baptism of their children, solemnly promised that, as soon as they reached the age when they could realize the importance of such a step, and had been properly prepared for it, they would "*bring them to the Bishop to be confirmed.*"

"*Bring them.*" What persevering effort, what earnest conversation with them by day and by night, what faithfulness in prayer, what uprightness of example, are included in these two words! And still, many parents who have thus promised before God, have not kept their agreement. They have been waiting for their children to take a notion to come, without giving themselves any concern about it.

If there should be a rumor of the small-pox, they would bring them to be vaccinated; or if the plague were approaching, they would flee with their dear ones to a place of safety: but, when the fatal contagion of sin is at work in the system, and the curses which follow it are most certainly known,—when God has told them what means they should use in such a desperate case, and they themselves have promised to employ them, they make light of the obligation, and absolutely do nothing toward rescuing their offspring from ruin.

I have stood by the bedside of the young when grim Death was bearing them away, who wept and prayed, and were driven almost to distraction, because, in the time of health, they neglected the calls of the gracious SPIRIT.

And I have known bereaved parents, whose declining years were overspread with deepest despondency and gloom, because of the remorse they felt that their sons or daughters, through their gross neglect, had gone hence, unreconciled to God. Yes, they had perished, with no certain and sustaining hope, in spite of the glorious truth which should win every soul to the service of God, that Jesus had "tasted death for every man."

SERMON XVII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFELONG WORK—AFTER CONFIRMATION.

What lack I yet?—ST. MATTHEW xix. *part of 20th verse.*

A VERY curious state of society existed during the latter half of the seventeenth century, in the form of a band of bloody freebooters, commonly known as Buccaneers. From the sweet paradise of their island home, where, in their several relations of fathers, and brothers, and neighbors, and friends, they carefully observed the laws of God and man, they went forth to plunder and destroy the unoffending inhabitants of regions far and near.

The same individuals, who were justly distinguished among themselves for some of the noblest attributes of humanity, forgetful of the fact that truth, and mercy, and right-doing, should be world-wide in their operation, became the terror of the weak and unprotected throughout the length and breadth of the Southern waters.

The buccaneers did right, very right, in asking a blessing before their meals, and in their attention to prayer, and in their grateful thanksgivings for mer-

cies; but, alas! how much they lacked to make them good and acceptable in the sight of God. How revolting to the feelings of all true Christians is this endeavor to unite a life of holiness with the indulgence of the most depraved and sinful passions!

Those persons whose hearts are not changed and made better by the grace of God, sustain the same relation to the divine laws which the desperate men of whom I have just spoken bore to the ordinary rules of justice and humanity.

Morality, in its pride and self-conceit, may presumptuously ask, like the young man in the Gospel, "*What lack I yet?*" wholly unconscious of the sad deficiencies and defects in character and conduct which estranges it from the true service of God; and we can only pray to the HOLY SPIRIT, in earnestness and hope, that He will open the blind eyes, and enlighten the darkened soul.

It is my wish to say a few words to-day, which may be of benefit to those who have lately taken upon themselves the solemn vows of Confirmation. I trust, also, that every class of persons may hear something by which they may profit. We may suppose an individual to go home, after the administration of this holy rite, and say to himself: "I have now done what the Scriptures enjoin, and what the church has appointed. I have been baptized and confirmed. '*What lack I yet?*'"

In reply, I would say, you have made a good be-

ginning, my friend. Your baptism and confirmation will be worth a great deal to you, if properly improved, because they are God's own institutions, which will be accompanied by His blessing.

Thus you have been brought into the church, and received the seal of adoption. You are now within the enclosure of the Saviour's sheepfold. You are standing in the vineyard of the Lord, with the implements of labor in your hands.

Now you must begin to *work*. Do not fold your arms and sit down to rest, before you have done any thing to weary you. You ask, "What lack I yet?"

I. You lack *a thorough devotion to God's service*. Hitherto, you have thought mainly of pleasing yourself, and of winning favor with the world. Let your motive, in time to come, be a higher and nobler one—to gain the favor of the Almighty.

The devotion to which I refer, will make us ready to deny ourselves, and to treat inconveniences as trifling matters, and to serve our MASTER in public and private, with glad and determined minds.

Such devotion never discovers that its shoes are thinner, and the walking worse, and the weather more oppressively warm or severely cold on *Sundays* than on other days of the week.

It is not guilty of the inconsistency of supposing that a crowded party, and the stifling air at a concert, are quite endurable for several hours on a stretch, and

yet be ready to faint with exhaustion, at the thought of one hour in the house of God.

True devotion will prompt us to be satisfied with plain clothes and wholesome food, that what so many waste in needless extravagance, may be saved for the poor.

True devotion would never be willing to spend more in ribbons, and laces, and gew gaws, in a *month*, than it can afford for the church of Christ in a *year*—a willing five dollars for a ticket of admission to some scene of pleasure, and a grudging five cents for the Gospel.

When we speak of a man who is devoted to his business, or of a woman, engrossed with household cares, the words are easily understood. We think of mind, and heart, and energies, all centred on one object.

So should it be with our devotion to God. If He really *is* what what we profess to regard Him, and if eternal happiness be worth our pursuit, we should show by our conduct that the profession is not vain.

II. We may safely say to a novice who has lately been confirmed, and who has only had time to put forth a few efforts to lead a life of holiness, that he lacks *the spirit of prayer*. I do not mean that you have neglected your devotions before, but that the flame may be made to burn more brightly upon the altar of the heart, and be more steady and unfluctuating.

Prayer is the only life of the soul. The *spirit* of prayer is the gift of God.

There is a wide difference between *saying* our prayers, and real, heartfelt devotion. A parrot was once presented to the pope of Rome, which could repeat with marvelous accuracy the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

It is greatly to be feared that the devotions of Christians are too often quite as much a matter of rote and form as the mutterings of this gay and foolish bird. One reason for this is, because the time of prayer is put off to the latest moment of the day, and crowded into the smallest possible space. We might certainly afford a little more time for the proper discharge of so important a duty.

The fact that people are harassed by business, and find it difficult to command an hour for retirement and devotion, only renders it the more necessary for them to consecrate such a season to God.

For these reasons, we ought to watch very narrowly and jealously, lest, through coldness or neglect, we lose the benefit of our prayers.

Do not be satisfied with the idle and irreverent habit of hurrying over with your devotions, after you have retired to bed. No matter how many curious eyes may be fixed upon you, be not ashamed to kneel humbly on your knees, night and morning, and pour out your hearts before God, making known your requests to Him.

III. Another thing which the newly confirmed may be supposed to lack, is a due appreciation of the fact that *God has appointed them a work to do*. "The Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servant, and to every man his work." St. Mark xiii. 34.

How solemn the reflection! This is our Saviour's own representation of the case. To every person who has enlisted under the banner of the Cross *there is appointed a work*. And this is what we might reasonably have expected. The Almighty works by the use of *means*, and He employs His people for agents in spreading abroad the glory of His name, and in the building up of His kingdom.

I most earnestly hope that each person who has been recently enroled among the soldiers of Christ, will enter now, with hearty zeal, upon his life-long work and warfare. You can show yourselves to be better parents and children, brothers and sisters, and friends and neighbors, than ever before. You can lend good books and tracts, and teach in the Sunday school, and help the poor, and nurse the sick, and thus be coworkers together with God.

IV. Those who have lately taken upon themselves the vows of God, may also be said to lack *patience*.

In our ordinary dealings with the world, this virtue is greatly needed. It is, however, quite *indispensable* in our character as the followers of the Lord Jesus.

Slanders and falsehoods are circulated about every

devoted minister of God, which, as a man of the world, he might resent with a blow; but these things must be borne in uncomplaining silence. For our comfort we may remember the example which has been set us by that blessed MASTER, "who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself."

If the *leaders* of the host suffer thus, *private Christians* may expect their full share of trial. What said the Apostle? "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*" 2 Tim. iii. 12.

The more you love your church, the more grating and galling will it be to your feelings to hear her misrepresented and abused; but "in patience possess ye your souls."

Make yourselves intelligent churchmen; and while you ought to avoid a spirit of controversy, you can be prepared for any assault; and, with truth on your side, you may feel certain of victory.

V. Once more. It may readily be supposed that those who have only *begun* the Christian life, by the open stand which they took at Confirmation, may be required to be incited to *perseverance*.

We are told to be continually going forward. There must be no stopping, nor turning back. Religion consists not in *excitement*, but in *action*.

If day by day we can discover in ourselves some little token for good, however small, which we had not observed before; if we are more meek and forgiving, more considerate and unselfish, more steadfast

and devoted, then may we have confidence toward God.

“ Mere human energy shall faint,
And youthful vigor cease ;
But those who wait upon the Lord,
In strength shall still increase.

“ They, with unwearied step, shall tread,
The path of life divine ;
With growing ardor onward move,
With growing brightness shine.”

Does any one who neglected to be confirmed at the late visitation of the bishop, ask himself, in the words of the text, “ What lack I yet ?” *Every thing*. I will not deceive you. While you despise Baptism, and Confirmation, and the Lord's Supper, you are rejecting God's appointed means of grace ; and although these could not *save* you, they would help you forward in the right way, which leadeth to eternal life.

I pray God that He will mercifully spare you long enough to embrace the privileges which, for this season, you have lost.

SERMON XVIII.

THE TIMID ENCOURAGED TO COMMUNE.

And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot.—
ST. JOHN xiii. 26.

I HARDLY know how to account for the backwardness which many persons manifest about receiving the Lord's Supper. If God had actually threatened that all who venture to partake of it, without being perfectly good, and pure, and holy, should instantly drop down dead, they could not well be more timid and reluctant.

Now, I honestly think that every one who has been baptized and confirmed, and who earnestly desires, by the help of God's grace, to lead a new life, is doing his soul a great wrong if he does not commune, and that, too, as often as the opportunity is afforded him.

You may think, perhaps, that this is taking a very low view of the subject; but I insist, nevertheless, that it is the true one, and that so far from detracting from the sacred character of the Lord's Supper, it exalts it to its proper place, as a means of grace and medicine for our souls.

I am free to confess that I shall use my best en-
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deavors in this sermon to persuade those well-disposed persons who have been waiting months and years, in order to correct every evil habit, and to become good enough to commune, that they ought to 'come forward *now* ; and that one great secret why they are so deficient in many respects, is simply because they have thus shamefully neglected a most important help, which God has provided for them.

Go back with me, in imagination, to Jerusalem, and see who they were that received the Holy Communion upon the first occasion of its celebration, and when our Saviour himself presided, in person, at the feast.

It was on Thursday night, the eve of the crucifixion. According to a previous arrangement, the twelve disciples met their Master in a room of the city, which had been suitably prepared for the observance of the Passover.

And when this ancient Jewish ceremonial was ended, Jesus took the bread and wine which were upon the table, and with these simple emblems instituted the Lord's Supper: the bread broken to remind all who should afterward receive it of His body, bruised upon the cross, and the wine poured out, of His precious blood. And we, this day, now that well-nigh nineteen hundred years have rolled away, are about to celebrate the same commemorative sacrifice of His body and blood, and to "do this" in remembrance of our Saviour's death and our Saviour's tender love.

"This is all reasonable and right," more than one timid person will be ready to say, "but, really, we are not fit to approach the Lord's table."

My friends, although we ought to watch ourselves closely, and to bring to light our darling sins, we have no right to condemn ourselves when God would not condemn us.

If you are sorry for your past misdoings, and have a thankful remembrance of the Saviour's death, I urge you to partake of the Lord's Supper, and I do it because I know what persons HE allowed to receive it at the first.

Look in again upon that humble chamber in Jerusalem. Whom do you see eating of the bread of life, and drinking the cup of salvation, which Jesus himself has blessed? Are they not all men of like passions with ourselves?

There are James and John, who, in their hasty zeal, would fain have called down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans, because of their bigotry and forgetfulness of the ordinary courtesies of life. Yes, James and John are receiving the Supper of the Lord, the feast of Christian love.

And there is Thomas—doubting Thomas—so slow of heart to believe. There too is Peter, partaking of the same heavenly feast: Peter, who only a few hours afterward, would curse and swear, and cowardly deny his Lord.

There, again, the Master is seen passing the bread

and the cup to Andrew, and Philip, and Matthew, and Bartholomew, and the other James, who reverently partake, but who, when dangers and death encompassed Him about, all forsook Him and fled.

And look once more. There, too, is Judas! We can scarcely believe our eyes; but the Saviour does not even pass *him* by, although he was at the very moment nursing base treachery in his heart; and that same night he fulfilled his murderous purpose, and "betrayed the innocent blood."

Now I ask what right has any one to declare that the Lord's Supper is something so sacred and awful, that none but perfectly good people must venture to receive it, when our Saviour himself admitted such characters as these to the table which His goodness had spread?

What reason is there in the plea which is so often urged by sober and well-meaning people, that they are afraid to commune, because they have done so many wrong things in times past, or because they are apprehensive lest they may be led into evil in the future?

Are they more uncharitable and vindictive by nature than James and John? Have they more serious and perplexing doubts than Thomas? Do they run a greater risk of apostacy than Peter?

When I see men and women, who ought to be regular in their attendance at the Lord's table, holding back, month after month, and going out of church be-

fore the Holy Communion is celebrated, as if the Saviour had never been crucified for them, and never had commanded them thus to commemorate His precious death, and all upon the ground of unworthiness; when, too, I hear the scoffer and the scorner speaking lightly of some who *do* obey the dying direction of their Lord, and insist that they ought not to be permitted to commune, I cannot persuade myself that such persons ever read the New Testament account of the first communion, or pondered over the verse where it is written that even *Judas* was allowed to partake.

Besides the general reluctance which so many manifest in regard to receiving the Lord's Supper, we generally find them ready to meet our exhortations with a variety of reasons, which they persuade themselves to be perfectly convincing. One will say: "I am too great a sinner to commune."

You forget, my friend, that our Saviour came, "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—"They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick."

No matter how grievous an offender you have been, if now you are ashamed and sorry for your sins, God is more than willing to pardon you.

Another will object that he is penitent, and that he *does* desire to lead a new and better life, but that he feels so little confidence in himself, that he is afraid of a sudden and mortifying relapse into his evil ways.

Now, if you are not really sincere in this expression of your desire to serve God; if you are cherishing any secret intention of going back again to forbidden indulgences; if, in short, you are merely making an *experiment* how a religious life will suit you, I must say that you are not a fit person to commune.

But if your difficulty is in truth a distrust of your own *strength*, while your *purposes* are honest and pure, I bid you, in God's name, come to His altar, and receive the Holy Communion to the comfort of your fainting soul.

A third will acknowledge, if you press him very closely upon the subject, that he stays away from the Lord's table because some are in the habit of communing, in whose sincerity he has no confidence, or because he has had a misunderstanding or quarrel with them.

I beg that those who are hindered from doing their duty by such a reason, will remember the lesson connected with the text. The priests who blessed the Passover of which our Lord himself partook, were even then plotting his death. He also knew that Judas had been bribed to betray him, and yet He gave the consecrated elements to him. How clearly does this prove that no personal unworthiness on the part of *others* can excuse *us* from the performance of our duty.

Again. Others neglect the Holy Communion because they think that they are too young to receive it.

In European countries, all are accustomed to commune from an early age. This practice is only a continuation of that of the Jewish church, in which children were allowed to partake of the Passover at the age of twelve years.

Certainly, when fourteen or fifteen years old, they are fully capable of understanding all that is requisite concerning the nature and design of the Lord's Supper, and their obligations to serve and please HIM who purchased their redemption with His own blood.

The solemnities of the Holy Sacrament do not interfere with the becoming cheerfulness of youth ; and indeed none have so good a right to be happy as the teachable and the obedient.

And now, my friends, can you consent, for any paltry plea, to stay away from the Holy Supper of the Lord ?

Suppose that the Saviour had commanded His ministers, at stated intervals, (once a month or oftener), to unfurl a banner in the church, with a cross emblazoned upon it, and invite all those who were not ashamed to recognize HIM as their king, and who trusted to His atonement to save them, to stand up around it, and renew their oath of allegiance to Him ; and that such as wished to be considered as His enemies, and who preferred to depend upon some other mode of salvation, should leave the temple. How many of you would go out ? Would you not *all*

flock around the standard, and glory in being soldiers of Christ?

Now, the only difference between the real state of things and the case I have supposed, is this: instead of directing that a flag should be unfurled, our Saviour has instituted a much more striking and affecting ceremony. He tells us reverently to partake of the consecrated bread and wine, in remembrance of His body and blood offered for us upon the cross, and He promises that such a participation shall be strengthening and refreshing to our souls.

And is this any thing so terrible? Should this fill us with dismay? Ought the uncovering of the Master's table, and His gracious invitation for all to draw near in faith, to be regarded as a signal for beating a speedy retreat, and retiring in hot haste from His presence?

He who overlooked Peter's denial, and did not banish Judas from the feast, will not be strict to mark *our* imperfections, if we come as humble penitents, seeking for His grace and benediction.

SERMON XIX.

STEADFASTNESS IN THE MIDST OF DANGERS.

We will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.—DANIEL iii. 18.

THE plain of Dura. Within this wide and ample space, the temple of Belus reared its lofty head. The countless multitudes who peopled mighty Babylon might be seen flocking to the sacred inclosure, to witness a gorgeous ceremonial in honor of their idol vanities. Nebuchadnezzar had made a golden image, and assembled the officers of the empire, and proclaimed, by a herald, that at the sound of music, all should fall down and adore it, on penalty of being cast into a burning fiery furnace.

The appointed signal was given. Tributary princes and obedient subjects from every province of his wide-spread dominions, prostrated themselves, as one man, to worship the senseless idol, which besotted ignorance and vain-glorious self-conceit had ventured to contrive.

But who are those three young men who are standing up at such a time, and in open defiance of the king?

Loud complaint is brought at once, and they are summoned before the throne. Nebuchadnezzar regards them with unmingled astonishment and rage.

Poor, captive, despised Jews! their merits had raised them to office and influence in a land of strangers. How, then, could they venture to refuse compliance with the word of him who had lifted them from the dust, and whose frown was instant death?

They have no apologies to make. They choose rather to put themselves in God's safe hands, persisting in the right.

The fiery furnace blazed and burned with seven times its wonted heat. The steadfast and determined Jews neither feared nor flinched. Offers of pardon again were made. Again the flat refusal was returned: "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

The infuriated idolaters delay not a moment more. The despisers of their gods are cast into the devouring flames. God always watches over His people with anxious care. The gracious promise had been made of old as an encouragement to fainting hearts: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Isaiah xliii. 2.

Meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar sat in sullen silence, to see the end. Suddenly a look of terror flashed across his savage face, and rising in haste, he appealed to his councilors, and said: "Did not we cast *three*

men *bound* into the midst of the fire?" Being assured that this was even so, he pointed to the blazing furnace, crying out with ill-concealed amazement and alarm: "Lo, I see *four* men *loose*, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt: and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

At the king's command the three Hebrew youths came forth from the furnace unscorched; and in the presence of the whole astonished court, he gave glory to Israel's God.

The same scenes—differing simply in the lesser details—has more than once been witnessed upon the earth.

The whole world is one wide plain of Dura, in which a golden image is set up. The God of heaven proclaims His sovereign will. He scorns the petty homage of a divided heart. His glory He will not consent to share with any created thing. Rival divinities, in spite of this, set up their groundless claims. They all have their due proportion of abject worshipers.

I. *The man of the world* bows down before the golden image. He adores that which seems nearest to himself. Popularity, and power, and place are first and foremost in his thoughts. He makes an idol of the world. He may have shadowy and uncertain images of a purer and holier faith which have survived through long years of avaricious toil—the faint whisperings of a mother's early teachings; but nothing

is *real* in his sight which cannot be coined into money, and which will not aid him in his ambitious plans.

The persuasive voice of temptation has only to be heard, sounding aloud like the inspiring music which summoned the deluded multitude to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image; and the man of the world forgets that the Omniscient One is observing all he does. He may be often reminded of his duty, but he hearkens only to forget. He cannot bring himself to look beyond the interests of the passing hour. He gazes with astonishment on those, who, while exposed to the same allurements with himself, have the firmness and fortitude to say: "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

II. The *Christian* has full scope for the exercise of the determined spirit manifested by the Hebrew youths, in a consistent walk with God.

We talk of days of persecution, of the dark ages, and of times and circumstances long past, as though times and circumstances had wholly changed.

Some who read this history of the fiery furnace, and the martyrs who endured its burnings, consider such trials as forever past. And so, we trust, they are, thank God, in this particular shape. But has not St. Paul prepared us for hardships, and crosses, and misrepresentations, and revilings, by the broad and unqualified declaration: "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*"?

A person who has the conscience to make religion a mere matter of taste and convenience, and who will degrade himself so far as to twist and turn to suit the popular current, need not fear of being disturbed.

Such a man may be *called* a Christian, and even fancy that he is quite a consistent one, but he is deceiving his own heart.

You may rest assured, if you are what you ought to be, no degree of prudence and reserve will free you altogether from the opposition and malice of an ungodly world. "Many winter blasts," says good Bishop Leighton, whose sweet and blameless life was checkered with sorrows multiplied, "will meet you in the most inoffensive way of religion, if you keep straight on in suffering; and war with the world is a part of the godly man's portion."

It seems, at first thought, a hard lot; but it has its blessings. Who would not be willing to bear his troubles patiently, when he hears the Saviour's consoling words: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. In Me, ye shall have peace."

It is certainly very foolish in any one to expose himself, without cause, to the opposition of the wicked, and to try to make a martyr of himself, by being obstinate and unyielding, when occasion does not call for it. There will be opportunities enough for showing the strength of his faith, without going out of the

way to find them. They will come, sooner or later, as a thing of course.

A very common mode in which good people are required to put their steadfastness to the test, is when they find themselves in a place where the church is feeble and in ill-repute. Worldly policy, the fear of giving offense, and other motives equally powerful with unstable souls, will present themselves in formidable array. Very likely there will be a severe struggle between interest and duty, the devil suggesting, in his plausible form of speech, that popularity should be looked after *first*.

The individual who, under such circumstances, will shut his eyes to all the probabilities of failure in case he should persist in doing right, and to the fair prospect of success should he obtain his own consent to do wrong, not stopping to inquire whether or not those against him may not be as countless as the image-worshippers at Babylon, and those with him as few and helpless as the victims who were cast into the furnace, but shall take his Prayer Book and stand up among God's people, and say, in the language of the Creed: "I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." Such a person, if placed under the same circumstances of trial as the Hebrew youths, would be sure to join in their positive refusal to yield one inch of the truth. He would be ready, like them,

bravely to declare: "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Among the apocryphal books of Scripture is one entitled, "The Song of the Three Holy Children." It is found in the early Greek and Latin versions of the Bible, though not in the Hebrew, and is said to have been sung by the devout Jews while enduring the trial of their faith in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

The hymn was long used in the Jewish church, and, in its main features, still forms a part of public worship in the Christian Church. It is a close paraphrase of the 148th Psalm. We know this "Song of the Three Holy Children," under the name of the "Benedicite." It is frequently used during Lent, instead of the *Te Deum*, because this long fasting season is one of our times of trial. This old hymn thus serves to link the present with the past, and to remind us that while the *sufferings* of the faithful will, in all times, be more or less the same, the *ground of consolation* is one.

The expression which Nebuchadnezzar employed, when he saw the flames had no power over the victims of his wrath, is somewhat remarkable. "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire: and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Whether the title, "Son of God," has reference to an angelic spirit, or to HIM who can claim in the highest sense to be "the Son of God," the conclusion

is equally consoling. In the midst of their trials and afflictions, God is present with His people.

If *Nebuchadnezzar* saw the Son of God, when engaged in persecuting the faithful; so, too, did *Saul*.

When the whole creation is wrapt in flames, and the world becomes one great fiery furnace, the true servants of God shall escape unhurt. From the midst of universal ruin, they shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and evermore abide with Him in glory.

My friends, do you desire that this may be *your* portion? You have only to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, to remain steadfast in the faith; and, upon every occasion of temptation and trial, to say to the worldly vanity which would gladly seek to wean your hearts from the service of its rightful Lord: "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

SERMON XX.

THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS INFLUENCE OVER OTHERS.

We are verily guilty concerning our brother.—GENESIS xlii. 21.

THE language of self-reproach, which sharp compunction wrung from Jacob's sons, may well be adopted by many among ourselves.

Take the most favorable case you can. Grant that you have done no positive harm to others. Have you not, too often, forgotten to do them good?

Each one leaves his mark upon the world. It rests with ourselves whether this influence shall be for good or for evil.

Some, with no more natural abilities, and no better opportunities than their neighbors, render all with whom they come in contact, wiser, holier, and happier. Others, possessing the same powers of mind, and surrounded by the same circumstances, stand like a moral Upas, rendering the very atmosphere about them unwholesome and deadly.

The great mass of mankind are more or less selfish. God desires and directs that we may be otherwise. He has placed us here in a sphere of usefulness.

Within our immediate circle, be it large or small, we may always find work enough.

But, alas! how many who *ought* to improve a privilege so great, are, by inactivity and gross neglect, preparing for themselves seasons of sorrow in the future, when they will cry out, in agony of soul, knowing it is then too late to offer advice or aid to one who has become hopelessly hardened in sin, but whom, at an earlier period in his career, they possessed influence enough to save: "*We are verily guilty concerning our brother.*"

The wicked might kindly have been warned; the ignorant might easily have been taught; the headstrong might have been moved by expostulation and love; the poor might have been effectually relieved.

Selfishness is the true secret of such unwarrantable neglect. We are disposed to think too much of our ease. We are altogether too sensitive about going out of our social sphere. The warnings, and instructions, and expostulations, and tokens of interest, of which I speak, might all be brought to bear upon the cases of those in our neighborhood, without the least compromise of self-respect or prudence on our part, and with no risk of exciting surprise or displeasure on theirs.

Then, as to acts of benevolence, no difficulty of the kind need be feared. Excuse our hardness of heart upon what ground we may, truth must oblige us to confess that it is nothing but selfishness and parsi-

mony, at the last. Although many kind actions are certainly done, yet the selfishness of the unrenewed heart, if left without counter influences, of various sorts, would be shown at all times and under all circumstances. That was a fine conceit of an old artist, which painted an alms-chest covered with cobwebs, as a symbol of charity!

The Christian is set as a *light* in the world. But let him look back with impartial eyes upon his past life, and see how comparatively unprofitable it has been. He has had it in his power to *say* or *do* something every day, for the benefit of perishing sinners; and yet he has either forgotten the obligation, or indolence, and pride, and covetousness, have placed stumbling-blocks in the way, and hindered his purposes of well-doing.

Now, dismal and disheartening as such a retrospect must certainly be, we shall continue to go on in quite as unprofitable a course, unless some unusual effort be made to do better.

Christians should not be contented with being in the right road themselves, but they should feel a lively interest in the welfare of others. Single-handed and alone, they may not always be able to accomplish what they desire. Then it is that they should consult and act in concert with others.

They must get over the reluctance which so many good people manifest to take a decided course which

may commit them, before the eyes of the world, as the servants of God.

This backwardness is owing, in a great measure, perhaps, to the disgust which they have felt at the ebullitions of ignorant fanaticism and misguided zeal.

The prophet, however, certainly describes a sound and healthy condition of the public mind in regard to religion, when he says: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." Malachi iii. 16. And again, in the Psalms: "Thy saints shall bless Thee, O Lord, they shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts and the glorious majesty of His kingdom." Ps. cxlv. 10-12.

I do not mean that such intercourse between Christian people should consist in pious sentimentality, but in sensible, encouraging, and instructive converse, which may "provoke unto love and to good works."

The Church of God is too seldom the subject of our thoughts. It is too little spoken of, too little labored for. Men who would gladly talk for an hour at a time, to convince another that his *political* opinions were wrong, will let him go down to his grave in doubt and darkness in reference to his undying soul.

It fills one with indignation to see members of that Church which has CHRIST for its Founder and Head,

that Church which saw the beginning of all the governments upon earth, and which was alive and vigorous "when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshiped in the temple of Mecca," that Church upon whose wide-spread greatness the sun never goes down, I say it fills one with indignation to see the members of this universal kingdom of God sitting mute and unresisting, while her claims are ruthlessly assailed, and her honor trampled in the dust.

I am no friend to the unnecessary and offensive bringing forward of these topics upon all occasions; but the Christian who is too careless or too indolent to inform himself about such things, and too weak-spirited to open his lips when the fitting opportunity does arise for convincing another of his untenable and dangerous position, may live to give utterance to the unavailing regret, after his friend has been drawn away into some grievous form of error: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother."

But this great and glorious work may be sympathized in, and shared by those who have not the education to enable them to summon Church history and argument to their aid, when the cause of Christ is evil spoken of, and the enemy comes in like a flood. *May be*, did I say? *must be* would be nearer the truth. God will hold all who profess to be His servants to a strict account for what they might have

been able to accomplish in the way of turning the minds of others to the truth.

Christians are responsible for their *example*. They are "the salt of the earth." They are "the leaven," which must leaven the whole lump. Their *example* in their families, in private intercourse with friends, and in their regular occupation, should be *safe and consistent*. *Christian principle* should be discovered in every thing. And if this rule applies to every-day affairs, how much more weight does it carry when we think of higher duties. A Christian careless about prayer! A Christian irregular at Church! A Christian willing to make the rash experiment whether or not his soul can live without the spiritual food provided for it in the Lord's Supper! A Christian thinking more of being well settled in this world than of securing a title to a heavenly inheritance!

Is it any wonder that the ungodly mock? Can we be surprised that unbelievers multiply? Is it astonishing that such a reckless disregard of ordinary duties, and such a strange forgetfulness of the importance of setting a good example, should draw a long train of calamities in the wake of inconsistent Christians, and cause them, in the hour of sickness and death, to cry out, at the remembrance of a brother, or husband, or child, or friend, shipwrecked and ruined by their neglect: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother"?

Christians are also *responsible for personal efforts to benefit others.*

The sense of such an accountability will be shown in daily prayers in behalf of the thoughtless and unconcerned, by kind, prudent, well-timed conversation, and by generous contributions of money to sustain and spread the Church of God.

Christians cannot be too active, and devoted, and zealous in so great and glorious a work.

The members of their own households claim the first share in their attention. Children and servants should be made to attend public worship; and those who have passed the years of childhood, and who consider themselves as men and women, though still sheltered beneath the paternal roof, ought constantly to be exhorted to pay due regard to the requirements of the Gospel; and no long-continued stubbornness and disobedience, and no degree of deadness and unconcern, should palsy such efforts, or lead them to give up in despair.

From the narrow circle of family influence let your efforts be directed abroad, and let relatives, and neighbors, and friends, have no cause to reproach you at the last, with the harrowing and terrible accusation that you never took the least trouble to show them that you considered their crooked and perverse ways to be either wrong or dangerous.

Would you stand by quietly and see a person step into a little leaky boat, which, to his blurred and

blinded vision seemed safe and sound, and push off from the land upon the stormy, troubled waters, without telling him of his danger? Should his life be lost for want of such a warning, would not your mind be afterward distressed and disturbed, nay, would not conscience goad you almost to distraction? and in the still hour of midnight, when deep sleep falleth upon men, would you not start up in terror, from feverish dreams, imagining that you saw again the swelling billows and the shattered bark, and heard the agonizing death-wail?

And yet, my friends, what would such a calamity be, compared with that which may now be ready to overtake you; some one, over whose eternal destiny you have influence and control, venturing upon the dangerous ocean of life, and you neglecting, by example, by prayer, by daily counsel and expostulation, to render the voyage certain and safe; you, wrapped up in business, or occupied wholly by domestic cares, and regardless of the hour when the piercing shrieks of lost souls shall fill your minds with dismay, and call forth the bitter and unavailing regret: "*We are verily guilty concerning our brother.*"

SERMON XXI.

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S MISSION.

All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.—Acts ix. 89.

A LIFE of usefulness must always be a happy one. It will, of course, have its hours of sadness and gloom; but these will be comparatively few.

The little picture presented in the text, is one well calculated to touch the heart. An active, humble-minded Christian woman at Joppa, had fallen sick and died. Sorrowing and sympathizing friends prepared her body for the burial, and laid it in an upper room. Messages were sent in haste to Lydda, a distance of fifteen miles, to summon Peter to their aid. He came at once, and entering the chamber of death, found himself in the midst of those who had so much reason to lament their loss. "And all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them."

The quaint Burkitt very justly observes, that "The best relics of the saints that can remain in honor of

them when departed, are acts of piety toward God, and of charity to the poor."

The sequel of this story you can read for yourselves. Let us endeavor now to improve the part which has been already given. The text affords a striking example of quiet, unobtrusive usefulness, which it is by no means difficult to imitate.

It needs no organization into a society or band. It has occasion for no officers and books of record. It forms the nucleus of no company of gossips, for collecting and retailing news. Its deeds are not paraded in the public prints, that all the world may read. It is the example of a Christian woman, fulfilling, as best she can, the will and commandments of her Lord. It is a specimen of true charity, stripped of all those disguises in which modern extravagance is fond of seeing her arrayed. Like the great laws of Nature, this heavenly grace of charity performs its allotted work in silence, looking forward to a better world for its everlasting reward.

And what a large share of labor is done by Christian women! How long they have taken the lead in every good word and work! From the beginning of the Christian Church, they have formed a very considerable majority of its members, and have always been most zealous in its cause.

They constitute one vast benevolent society, whose history reaches back to those early days when Mary brake the box of spikenard, and poured it on the Sa-

viour's feet, and others, moved by a like affection, "prepared spices and ointments" to embalm His body after the Crucifixion.

The annals of the Church, in all ages, furnish one continuous record of the faith, the devotion, the self-sacrifice of woman. She has ever been the kind foster-parent of the orphan. She has tenderly nursed the sick. She has soothed the afflicted by her heart-felt sympathies. She has attracted the little ones to Sunday School and church. She has been the clergyman's best earthly assistant, in every time of need.

But you must not suppose that *all* Christian females are thus usefully employed—thus ready to do, and dare, and suffer. Had this been the case, I should not have felt it my duty to have referred to the subject here.

It is because many are remiss, and backward, and weak in faith, that I have shown what women *have* done, that others may be incited by such examples to imitate their labors of love.

But there must first be found *a willing mind*, before we can hope for any thing like activity and zeal. Habits of industry must be formed. No matter how easy your worldly circumstances may be, no one is rich enough to be idle.

"Who can find a virtuous woman? (says the wise man) for her price is far above rubies. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands,

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

Solomon is not speaking of the character which becomes a person in humble life alone. He is delineating the qualities of a woman of rank, and his description is given for the purpose of aiding a king in his choice of a suitable wife.

But while industry thus exerts itself at *home*, it should not confine its operations to these narrow limits.

Some excellent persons are so short-sighted, that they think their obligations are all discharged when domestic arrangements are kept in a proper train. They forget that the Master whom they serve has other duties, which should oftentimes direct their steps abroad.

I. There are poor and sick to be visited and relieved. Females can, in most cases, perform such offices far better than men. And yet how many are allowing this talent to be unimproved!

I do not wish to be understood as teaching that every Christian woman is required to forsake her home, and go forth upon such an errand as that which has rendered the name of Florence Nightingale so fragrant throughout the world. But all who have the disposition, can find an ample field of usefulness, without quitting their own immediate neighborhood. Some, however, are quite as ignorant of the wants of the poor in the parish, as if they lived beyond the seas.

They imagine that their part has been most fully done when they have contributed a trifle to the alms on Communion days.

Others have begun so late in life to redeem their misspent time, that they give up in despair, when they find this work of charity so different from what they thought. The *reality* is frequently very unlike the picture which *fancy* paints. "If we have drawn romantic notions of misfortune, and annexed to it the ideas of venerable, simple, docile, and grateful, we shall soon become disgusted with the practice of charity, and fly back to the reveries of speculative benevolence, as an asylum from the disappointments we meet with in the world, as it is really constituted."*

But even allowing that our ardor may be chilled in the manner just described, we have no right to stay our hand, or stop our work. Is there no reason to fear that *we* may be numbered among the ungrateful children of that Father in Heaven who is "kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil"?

The duty in question is not always pleasant, but this is no excuse for its neglect. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." St. James i. 27.

* Sydney Smith's Sermons.

II. Another branch of Christian duty, where female energy is called for, is the Sunday School.

I shall indulge in no strain of eulogy upon this auxiliary of the church. It is enough to say that it is an institution excellent in its design, and capable of accomplishing much lasting good. I refer not so much to the kind of lessons taught, and the number of verses learned, but to the habit of punctuality and attention which children thus gradually acquire—the habit of gathering together at the best and safest place on earth, the church—the habit of acknowledging an inferiority in age and learning to those who come to teach—the habit, with lisping and artless tongue, of repeating the Name, the Works, the Faith of Him whom, in after years, they will thus be fitted to worship and adore.

Nor is it the *pupils* alone who are benefited in this way. The *instructors* cannot fail to derive profit from it. Oftentimes, truths which have been read in books, and listened to in sermons, and which have left no perceptible impression before, will touch the heart, while, perhaps, in a mechanical and careless way, they may be endeavoring to impart them to others.

Thus it happens that teachers in the Sunday School are arrested by some thought presented in the lesson, and ask themselves the anxious question, "*Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*"

But it is too late in the day to be looking after arguments to prove the beneficial effects of Sunday

Schools. No one doubts the fact. My object now is to excite more interest in this behalf. All who can, should give their time and influence as teachers. You should not be content to hurry through with the appointed task, and think no more of your responsibility until Sunday returns again. The children should be visited at their homes. They should be encouraged to be regular at church. They should be taught to love it. Those who live too far off to act as teachers, or whose health or domestic cares prevent them from taking part in this work, should consider it their duty to provide the needful books.

III. A third way in which Christian females especially may render themselves most useful to the church, is by acting as sponsors for the young. Some are disposed to decline this office, on account of its responsibility. But suppose that *all* should do so—how could God's work be done? It often happens, from peculiar circumstances, that females make better sponsors than men; and they should be thankful that so wide a field of usefulness is thus opened before them. Their faithful and persevering labors will ultimately be crowned with success.

I have now pointed out some of the more prominent ways in which Christian women may, without losing sight for a moment of the modesty and unobtrusiveness which become their sex, do much for the advancement of God's glory. All such acts of kindness done

to Christ's poor and His little ones, will be rewarded as though done unto Him.

It is the custom of our times to build, over the graves of the departed, conspicuous monuments, covered with eulogiums upon those whose bones are crumbling beneath.

"*To lie like an epitaph*" has passed into a proverb—and one for which there is too much ground in truth.

My friends, let it be your endeavor to leave behind the memory of a well-spent life, which shall require no such worthless remembrances.

Better far than all outward tokens of respect are the sincere and heartfelt sorrowings of those who realize that they have lost a friend.

No Christian woman could desire a more glorious memorial than that recorded in the text—a memorial of usefulness, kindness, and love: "All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them."

SERMON XXII.

THE DUTY OF FASTING.—AN EXHORTATION FOR LENT.

I humbled my soul with fasting.—PSALM XXXV. 18.

So said David. All God's faithful children, under every dispensation, have observed the same rule. So must each one now say, who hopes for the highest degree of blessedness hereafter.

"Can none, then, be saved without fasting?" I have heard people sometimes ask. This question might be answered by another: "Can any be saved without praying?" Those who are so perfect as to stand in no need of *prayer*, may most properly neglect the *fasts*. The one duty is as binding upon us as the other. The *same authority* has commanded the observance of both; the same prominence is given to both throughout every part of God's word; and the same spirit of obedience which leads Christians to perform any duty, should influence them in the careful discharge of these.

The Old Testament is full of examples, showing that fasting was practiced by the Jews in their individual and national capacity, and that this means of testifying sorrow for sin, and seeking for the Divine blessing, was never resorted to in vain. David fasted

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and prayed when he had so grievously sinned against Uriah. Ahab fasted when the judgments of God were denounced against him by Elijah. The Ninevites fasted upon the preaching of Jonah. Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast throughout Judah, when the combined forces of Ammon and Moab were invading the land. And in all these instances, the fact is recorded with incontestible marks of Divine approbation. David's dreadful wickedness was pardoned. Nineveh was spared. Jehoshaphat was victorious. And even wicked Ahab, whose repentance was by no means sincere, gained a delay of the sentence which had been justly denounced against him.

But fasting is an *unpleasant* duty; and those who wish to escape from it, while they readily grant that it was practiced by the Jews, deny that it is binding upon Christians. Is this true? Did not our blessed Lord himself fast forty days and forty nights, thus setting us an example of subduing the flesh to the Spirit, that in this way His "godly monitions" may be more perfectly obeyed? Do not the Apostle tell us that they were "in fastings often"? Do they not enjoin it upon Christians to "give themselves to fasting and prayer"?

"This may all be true," answers an objector, "but why not leave it to each one to discharge this duty when he feels disposed, and why celebrate the fast of Lent, which sprung up, perhaps, during the dark ages of the world?"

In reply to the first question, I would merely say that if we wait until we feel in a *humor to fast*, we shall never fast at all. Hence the wisdom of the Church in appointing *stated seasons* for it, when we are *bound* to attend to it, or prove ourselves unworthy and disobedient children.

As to the assertion in regard to the *origin of the Lenten fast*, no one can make it without betraying a degree of ignorance of which professing Christians should be ashamed to be guilty.

Our Saviour said to His disciples: "The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from you, and then shall ye fast." St. Matt. ix. 15.

We are told by very ancient writers, that after Christ's crucifixion, the Apostles fixed upon this season as a fast; and although it is probable that the precise number of days which we now keep was not determined until a few years later, still, of all the essential features of the Lenten fast, it may be said:

"Not now, nor yesterday, but always thus
These have endured."

In the 61st of the Apostolic Canons it is declared: "If any Bishop, Priest, Deacon, Reader, or Singer, do not keep the Holy Fast of Lent, forty days before Easter, on the Wednesdays and Fridays, let him be deposed, if he be not hindered by some bodily infirmity; but if he be a layman, let him be suspended from Communion."

The antiquity of this fast may also be seen from a letter written by the emperor Constantine, to the bishops comprising the Council of Nice, which met A. D. 325. Speaking of the necessity of observing uniformity in the celebration of Easter, by which Lent is concluded, he remarks: "It is fit, therefore, that we should perpetuate to all future ages the celebration of this rite *which we have kept from the first day of our Lord's Passion even to the present times.*"

In order to show the *universality* of this observance of Lent, I need only quote St. Basil's words: "In this time of Lent," he says, "there is no island nor continent of the earth, no city nor nation, no extreme corner of the world, where the edict of this fast of Lent was not heard. Yea, whatsoever armies, merchants, travelers, or mariners are abroad, this fast comes unto them all, and with joy they all receive it. This composes every house, every city, and every people in society, and quiet, and concord. This stills the late clamors, contentions, and noises of the town. Let no one, therefore, exempt himself from the number of fasts, in which every degree, nation, and age almost, of men, and all of all dignities whatsoever, are engaged."

You perceive, then, that those who refuse to *fast*, are disobeying one of the plainest duties of the Christian; and those who neglect the *fast of Lent*, are setting at nought a rule which has been observed by the whole Church in every land since the days of the Apostles.

It certainly is a question of great moment whether the leaving undone so important and so clear a duty can be *safely* persisted in. There is no reason nor excuse why such a risk should be run. "Some," observes the quaint but straightforward, truth-telling Dr. Saulter, "some, who would be reforming while they should be obeying, who are too holy to need fasting, have too much of the Spirit to stand in fear of the flesh, and who still express God's mercies by 'marrow and fatness,' and such other expressions as please their palate and leave a relish upon the tongue that speaks them, these will hear of nothing but of liberty. They must have elbow-room at their meat, and as for Lent they defy it; it is popish, anti-christian, and idolatrous."

Woe, woe be to him who thus trifles with his Maker, and in the very midst of light and knowledge, makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. They profess to be anxious to "live godly in Christ Jesus," but it must be in *their own way*. They will not be restrained and kept in by fixed rules.

And this is the true secret why so many go on heavily and sluggishly in the path of obedience. This is the reason why so many "perish from the right way," and sink down "into the pit of destruction."

The provision made by the Church in her yearly round of festivals and fasts, is exactly what our nature needs; and there is no shorter way of arriving at the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

If we desire really to enjoy the days of happiness, we must be content to humble ourselves in the season of humiliation. None rejoice in Easter-tide less than those who have not fasted and mourned in Lent.

But while it is expected of all to keep the fasts of the Church, all cannot observe them alike.

The sick, or such as are just recovering their health, may not be able, perhaps, to abstain from food; and they who are obliged to toil hard for their daily bread, require more to sustain their strength than those whose lives are less active. But all should deny themselves in some way.

If unable to conform to the customs of the Church by a *bodily fast* at this time, let them be as economical as possible, and contribute the money thus saved toward the Easter offerings for missions and for the relief of the poor.

Our external behavior should also correspond with the humiliation and seriousness which we profess.

Amusements which are lawful and proper enough at other times, are not so in Lent. By attending to these rules, we shall, like St. Paul, be keeping under the body, and bringing it into subjection "to the Spirit"; thus shall we gradually become "crucified unto the world, and the world unto us"; and by persevering in this course, we shall learn at last, with the same Apostle, to "take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake."

You will notice that I have made appointments for special services, to be held during this holy season. The hour is one which will interfere very little, if any, with your business. Every family can, as well as not, send *some* representatives.

If mud, or wet, or cold, can frighten us from our duty now, we may feel quite sure that, had we lived in earlier times, when the faith of Christians was tried by the terrors of martyrdom, we should have been among the cowardly multitude who purchased *bodily* safety and the good-will of heathen rulers by an open denial of their Lord.

Ours is not an age of persecution, with fire and fagot; but there is *no age* in which Christians are not expected to *deny themselves*. God does not try *us* so severely as He tried His people in other times; but day by day He is sifting and weighing and noting down our neglect of plain duties, and soon, very soon, He will call us to an account for it. Rest assured, my friends, you will never reach heaven by merely doing what pleases you, and what costs you no great effort to perform. We all have a cross to carry; and if you never yet have felt its weight upon your shoulders, the heavier it will be when God lays it upon you.

From the conduct of many Christians, it might readily be supposed that we who fast and meet often in the Church for prayer, are performing works of

supererogation—more and better services than God requires of us.

But oh, how far is this from being the case! Of the best it must be said: "We are unprofitable servants."

If we observe every appointed festival and fast, give liberally of our worldly substance, and "do all such good works as God has prepared for us to walk in," we have nothing to boast of; we merely show our cheerful obedience, and must still cling fast to the Cross of the Redeemer.

And how have those of you who are making light of these things, purchased a dispensation for your neglect?

Have you really made such advancement in holiness—have you gained such a mastery over the infirmities of the flesh—have you learned so faithfully to obey God's commandments, as to require less than we do, these helps which I have named for growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour?

However careful we may be in other ways to reform our lives and improve our hearts, I should exceedingly dread to be in the place of one on his dying bed, who, in reviewing his past life, could not say, as David did: "*I humbled my soul with fasting.*"

SERMON XXIII.

SICKNESS.

The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.—PSALM xli. 3.

No one who has not felt the pains of sickness can fully appreciate the blessing of health.

When the weak and wan sufferer is carried for the first time from the bed to an easy chair—when, a day or two after, he begins to move with unsteady steps across the chamber floor—when he ventures to stand in the door-way, and breathe again the fresh air of heaven—when he rides or walks abroad, recovering, by slow degrees, his wonted strength, how glad and grateful he ought to be!

The lassitude and sufferings of sickness are hard to bear; and yet it is a wholesome discipline, which all of us greatly need.

Such things do not come by chance. Those who would persuade you otherwise, are ready to deny that the Almighty exercises any influence or authority in His own world.

“Times of sickness, times of health,
Blighting want and cheerful wealth,
All our pleasures, all our pains,
Come and end as God ordains.”

(192)

The design of sickness may be threefold. Sometimes it is sent to punish the wicked. Such was the case when God smote the Philistines with a sore disease for carrying away the Ark. 1 Sam. v. 6.

Sickness may be intended to try the patience and constancy of the righteous. We have examples of this in the lives of Job and Hezekiah.

Sickness may also be designed to show forth God's glory. It was so in the case of the man who was born blind, whose eyes our Saviour opened. St. John ix. 3. The sickness of Lazarus was likewise to this end. St. John xi. 4.

These several causes of sickness are well summed up in the tender exhortation which the Church addresses to her children in the hour of their suffering: "Dearly beloved, . . . whatsoever your sickness be, know you certainly that it is God's visitation. And for what cause soever this sickness be sent unto you; whether it be to try your patience for the example of others, and that your faith may be found in the day of the Lord, laudable, glorious, and honorable, to the increase of glory and endless felicity; or else it be sent unto you to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eyes of your Heavenly Father, know you certainly, that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's mercy for His dear Son's sake, . . . it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life."

Blessed is he who so walks before God in the straight and peaceful paths of holy living, that, in the time of sickness, it can be said of him, in the comforting words of the text, "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: THOU wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

Sickness is one of the greatest trials of our mortal state. If the world could be quite free from this, most people might esteem themselves comparatively happy. But no panacea will ever be discovered to cure the many ills which flesh is heir to.

When the Saviour began his mission of mercy upon earth, His sovereign power was fully exercised day by day. We read that He went about through the land, "healing all manner of sickness among the people." St. Matt. iv. 23.

And again it is said, that His fame spreading abroad to distant regions, "they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases, and He healed them." St. Matt. iv. 24.

He told His Apostles that a part of the blessing to be pronounced over the faithful at the last, would be because they had visited and cared for the sick. St. Matt. iv. 25-36.

He also charged them that, into whatsoever city they came, they should be careful to heal the sick.

We find St. Paul curing the father of the generous Publius, and others likewise, while he stopped at Malta. Acts xxviii. 8, 9.

Affectionate mention is made, in his letter to the Philippians, of Epaphroditus, their Bishop, who had been "sick nigh unto death" (Phil. ii. 27), but whom God in mercy had restored to health.

These few records of the olden time may serve as a specimen of the ordinary lot of men. Multitudes are always sick, requiring the grace of patience to enable them to bear up with uncomplaining fortitude, and appealing to the sympathy and help of those who enjoy the precious boon of health.

And now, from such reflections we may learn two things—our duty toward the sick, who may need assistance; and our duty toward ourselves, in view of sickness, which will sooner or later come.

I. First, as to our duty toward the sick, who may need assistance.

In one of the Homilies against the fear of death, "sore sickness, and grievous pains," which, in many cases, mark its approach, are mentioned among other reasons why it is natural to dread the assaults of the last enemy.

Moreover, the agonies of the sick are sometimes so excruciating, that there is danger of the loss of mind, and even of their denying the faith. Hence, in that most earnest prayer in the Burial Service, we are taught to say: "O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee!"

All this might happen, with nothing but *sickness*

to be endured, and when free from the attendant circumstances of poverty, and other manifold discomforts.

Those who are well off in life, can have things arranged to suit themselves. The large and well ventilated room, the comfortable bed with its clean and wholesome linen, the varied delicacies to suit the morbid appetite, the gentle and unwearied attentions of kindred and friends—all this, and more, money may readily command.

But there are those who can expect no such alleviations to suffering.

The kind physician comes.—May God reward, at the last day, the many visits of mercy which he makes to the afflicted poor!—He examines the patient's symptoms, and carefully prescribes. A raging fever is at its height. The doctor leaves directions that the sick man should be kept quiet. Quiet, indeed! He might as well command the mill-dam to stop its ceaseless roar, or the hard hailstones not to rattle upon the roof.

What with a whole family crowded into one small room, the air stifling hot, the necessary work going on, noisy children constantly running in and out, the racket in the next house, or even in the apartment overhead, how can quiet be hoped for?

The best medical advice may be given, but half the chances of recovery are taken away by annoyances such as these.

The minister of God arrives. He asks of the welfare of the sick. He prays for his recovery. His petition in such a case is nothing more nor less than asking God to work a miracle in the sufferer's behalf, because he must be left in "a condition much more likely to make a well man sick, than a sick man well."

It is very true that many of these painful circumstances, which add to the miseries of sickness, cannot be wholly done away with, but they may be greatly improved; and our own beds will be the softer, and our own consciences lighter, if those of us who are able would take a little more care about the wants of the sick.

II. But besides remembering the poor in such cases, we ought also to think seriously of the time when all will be called to lie down upon the bed of languishing.

You may be well and active now. The bloom of uninterrupted health may paint your cheeks. Strength enough, and to spare, may be afforded to attend to your daily business. Aye, buoyant youth may display the exuberance of spirits in the mazy dance, and scenes of festivity and mirth; but the time of sickness must come!

There will be some morning of your lives, when business will be going on in the shops, and on the streets, but *you* will be far otherwise engaged. There will be some night of pleasure, when the young and

the beautiful have gathered at the concert or the ball, and *you*, who have been accustomed to be conspicuous at such places before, will be tossing uneasily upon your couch.

You may perhaps be missed, and carelessly inquired after, but it will not cause one note of the songstress to tremble, it will not hinder one whirl of the dancers, because it is whispered that you are dangerously sick. The disease may not be fatal. You may recover again. But remember that the time for your *last* sickness is drawing near.

Most of you have had ailments of some sort, and have been confined for a season to the house. Some have been shaken by agues, or parched by fevers, or racked by coughs, or agonized by breaks and bruises. Did it ever enter your mind at such a time to begin an abstruse and perplexing study? Would the lawyer think of sending for Blackstone, or the tradesman for his ledger, to spend these hours of distraction and suffering in attending to business?

And suppose you that the bed of sickness is a convenient or suitable place to arrange your long neglected account with God.

Ask those who have been really ill—I am willing to leave the decision to them.

Grace to bear up under sickness must come from God. It must be sought for in time of health. In *harvest* we lay by food for the *winter*. In *health* prep-

aration should be made for the time of *sickness*, and the hour of *death*.

The enemy who is often looked for does the least harm when he comes. Thus let us prepare ourselves for death:

O let us all be truly wise. Then shall we have our portion in that blessed land where "the inhabitant shall not say, *I am sick*."

SERMON XXIV.

SUDDEN DEATH.

There is but a step between me and death.—1 SAMUEL XX. 8.

"CÆSAR the Dictator," remarks De Quincey, "at his last dinner party, and the very evening before his assassination, being questioned as to the mode of death which, in his opinion, might seem the most eligible, replied: 'That which should be most sudden.' On the other hand, the Divine Litany of the Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, place such a death in the very van of horrors. 'From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, good Lord deliver us.' Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities; it is the last of curses; and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it is treated as the first of blessings."*

When we come to look carefully into the use of the word *sudden*, it will be found that there is no necessary

* "Vision of Sudden Death."

difference on this point between the Pagan Cæsar and the Liturgy of the Christian Church. Both refer to a *violent* death.

By the term *sudden*, however, the Roman intended an *unlingering* death, while the Prayer Book means a death *without warning or preparation*.

Should the word *sudden* in the Litany be understood in a different sense from this, it would prove that many holy men had been earnestly praying to be delivered from something, which, at last, actually came upon them, and that God does not grant His people what they ask for.

In reading the biographies of devout men, I have been struck with the fact how often they have been carried away by *sudden, unlingering* deaths. A few instances occur to me at the moment. Bishop Kidder was killed by the falling of a chimney. Bishop Kemp, of Maryland, by the overturning of a stage. Bishop Heber died in a bath immediately upon his return from Church. Archbishop Whitgift was struck with paralysis on his way to the council chamber. Bishop Berkley died of disease of the heart while listening to the reading of his daughter. Bishop Griswold, of Massachusetts, sank down at the door of his assistant and successor. Bishop Fletcher expired while sitting in his chair, in apparent health.

And, not to multiply examples, the gifted and the good Dr. Arnold, the great master of history, a clergyman who has left an enduring mark upon our age,

awoke with a sharp pain in the chest, and very soon breathed his last.

Now, although they were called away without immediate warning, they did not die *sudden* deaths in the sense in which the word is employed in our prayers. They were *prepared* to go. The petition which they had offered up during their whole lives, was not denied.

Who among us has not need to join most heartily in the supplication, "*From sudden death, good Lord, deliver us*"? Every grand stride which is made in the march of improvement, is adding to the risk of our being snatched away without warning; and of course, if unprepared, it will be a *sudden* death—sudden in the most alarming sense of the expression—a death without hope.

The mighty agencies of Nature, and the tremendous forces called forth by science, have become obedient servants to man's overmastering will, and put to shame some of the ancient fables in the Arabian tales. But with every additional increase in *strength* and *speed*, comes also additional *peril*, and hence the greater need for constant preparation and unceasing prayer.

Let me illustrate this position by a few familiar scenes. Two steamboats, crowded with passengers, push off from the dock, and are soon plowing their way through the midst of the treacherous lake, or the wide and dangerous river. They start with a heavy

press of steam, and from the excitement of the passengers, it is evident that something of interest is at stake. The boats glide along smoothly side by side, each panting for the victory. The firemen may be seen, ranged on each side of the open furnaces, armed with long iron bars, with which they are constantly stirring up the blazing mass and cramming in more wood and coal. The smoke rises from the huge chimneys in volumes dark and portentous. The heat is becoming oppressive. A sickening smell of oil pervades the boat. The black paint shrivels off from the iron chimney. Suspicious puffs of smoke appear from the light wood-work. The air above the heated chimneys has assumed a lurid tinge. The combustible flooring, already scorched and charred, now blazes up, and the fiery sheet spreads instantaneously, far and wide.

I will drop the curtain at this point. The rush of the frenzied multitude, the shrieks of despair, and the agonizing groans of the dying, are too appalling to be described.

Of those who travel by water, it may, without exaggeration, be said, in the language of the text, that *there is but a step between them and death!*

The second scene. A train of cars leaves the railroad station, thronged with human beings, and is flying swiftly on its way. It passes through the valleys with lightning speed. It thunders across the rivers. It pants up the sides of some opposing hill. It passes,

unhindered, through the hearts of the mountains. The smoking engine, which leads the train, seems possessed of power, without limit or control.

But swiftness and safety are oftentimes, in a great degree, opposed. The arrangement of hours for starting and stopping, may be agreed upon with the nicest care. The most trusty agents may be employed. In machinery so complicated in itself, and spreading over so wide a space, accidents may happen in a thousand unexpected ways.

See the keeper of the drawbridge overtaken by drowsiness at his post. The moment for the passage of the thundering train is alarmingly near at hand. The shrill whistle proclaims the swift approach of the flying wheels. The unfaithful agent is roused from sleep, and hastens, with unwonted speed, to make amends for his unpardonable neglect. He comes a few seconds too late. A multitude, wholly unprepared for death, sink down in the angry flood!

Let us shift the scene to another place. The engine, with its long train of freight and living souls, is circling along some high embankment, overhanging a deep and threatening chasm. The broad and blazing eye of light which warns those before to beware of the rapid approach of the crushing wheels, affords little safety to such as are borne along, with lightning speed, without power to help themselves.

There is a slight obstruction in the way. A fragment of rock, from the cliffs above, has fallen upon the

track; or some fiend, in human shape, has placed a log across the rails. The engineer gazes through the thick darkness to guard against all dangers of the sort, but he sees it not.

A sudden jar! A rough and alarming bound! A strange heaving to one side! The train has gone over amongst the craggy rocks with a dreadful crash, which tells its own tale of horror!

And thus I might go on and paint other and still more alarming ways in which death, from this one system of improvements, should be looked for almost as a thing of course.

Of those who travel by land, it may, with all truthfulness, be said: "There is but a step between them and death."

And what constant occasion have we to offer in behalf of friends, the often-said, earnest prayer: "That it may please Thee, good Lord, to preserve all who travel by land or by water!"

But "sudden death" may be the lot of those who remain quietly, (and, as they hope, safely) at their homes.

"Each season has its own disease,
Its peril every hour."

In the very midst of life we are in death. Some have the seeds of disease sown in the system, which only require a trifling cause to develop, and to hasten the arrival of the destroyer. Others are exposed to the same result from a different source. The very super-

abundance of health renders their hold upon life most precarious. The palsy and apoplexy are waiting impatiently for their victims. There is danger of death by murder, by the accidental swallowing of poison, by lightning, by pestilence, by sudden exposure to heat and cold; by casualties innumerable, such as the falling of a brick or a decayed limb, by the use of fire-arms, by machinery, by the explosion of gun-powder, by the pressure of a crowd, or even, as in the case of Anacreon, of ancient poetic memory, by being choked with a grape-stone.

Instead of being astonished that we should be exposed to sudden death from such a variety of causes, the real ground for wonder is that an instrument made up of so many strings, should remain in tune so long.

I have not enlarged upon this doleful theme to render you low-spirited, but to impress upon you this important truth, that *our hold on life is extremely uncertain, and that if we have any preparation to make, we had better set about it without delay.*

A languid state of body, or a bewildered mind, may take our last hours entirely out of our control, even if death does not come upon us in the form of sudden accident.

It is well for us, while in life and health, to be making ourselves familiar with the image of the pale messenger. Joseph prepared his sepulchre in his

garden, and he reaped the reward of this wise forethought.

If you are living in the neglect of prayer, in the neglect of your Bible, in the neglect of any known duty, oh, I beseech you, attend to these things *now*. Yours may be a call without previous warning, and which brooks no delay. God will mercifully accept of such preparation as if made in your last hours. Then though death may come, all unlooked for and unannounced, to you it will not be *sudden death*.

SERMON XXV.

GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.—ST. MATTHEW xx. 18.

PALESTINE is a land of hills and valleys. Mountains of greater or less elevation and extent “shoot up in all directions, and greet the approaching traveler from every quarter. During the sacred pilgrimage, he never loses sight of them; and when he leaves the consecrated soil, they are the last objects to which he turns and bids a lingering farewell.”*

These physical characteristics of the Land of Promise explain those expressions so often met with in the Scriptures, one of which has been announced as the text: “*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.*”

The holy city stood upon its own sacred hill, with “mountains round about.” Approach it from what direction you might, it would be, of necessity, “*going up to Jerusalem.*”

Heaven, as you know, is spoken of in the Bible as “the great city,” “the holy Jerusalem” (Rev. xxi. 10), “the New Jerusalem.” Hebrews xii. 22, and Rev. iii. 12.)

* Wainwright's “Pathways of our Blessed Lord.” p. 44.
(208)

It was this heavenly Jerusalem to which the patriarchs looked forward, a city "whose Builder and Maker is God." Heb xi. 10.

It was this glorious city to which St. Paul refers when he says, "Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all." Gal. iv. 26.

It was this heavenly Jerusalem which St. John beheld in vision, and which his fervid pen has so graphically described. Rev. xxi., etc.

If the position of the *earthly* Jerusalem, in Palestine, was such, that every one, before entering her gates, must "*go up*" to get there, so, with the strictest propriety and truth, when speaking of the *heavenly* city, of which the other Jerusalem was a type, may we adopt the language of the text, and, in answer to those who ask in amazement, whither our steps are turned, and why we refuse to be hindered by the trifling vanities of the world, say, in the words of that Divine Saviour whose followers we claim to be, "*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem.*"

The brilliant picture which the imagination so readily forms of the paradise of the redeemed, drawn from various intimations given us in the Word of God, must inspire every one with a desire of sharing in the future blessedness of God's children. What questions, then, can possibly be more interesting and important than these: "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall rise up in His holy place? Who shall hereafter have right to the tree of life,*

and enter in through the gates into the city?" Psalm xxiv. 3, and Rev. xxii. 14.

I might answer, in a single sentence, *those whose conduct shows that they are "going up to Jerusalem."*

This expression of the text may be fairly said to imply,

I. *A growth and an advancement in those things which are good.*

No one is born holy. It is impossible to become so by a sudden change, such as is sometimes confidently talked of. It requires time, and patience, and prayer. And yet it is all-important that this radical change in our characters and habits should take place; for the Bible emphatically declares, that "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews xii. 14.

It is right that this should be so, over and above the reason that the happiness of Heaven is designed as a *reward* for God's obedient children. "There are bodily indispositions which affect the taste, so that the sweetest flavors become ungrateful to the palate; and indispositions which impair the sight, tinging the fair face of Nature with some sickly hue. In like manner, there is a moral malady, which disorders the inward sight and taste; and no man laboring under it is in a condition to enjoy what the Scriptures call "the fullness of joy in God's presence, and pleasures at His right hand for evermore."

Those who "go up" to the heavenly Jerusalem

gradually increase in holiness by a diligent use of the appointed means; such as daily prayer, the careful study of the Bible, regularity in attending public worship, and a devout participation of the holy Supper of our Lord.

II. Another evidence that we are "going up to Jerusalem," and that we shall finally be allowed to enter the golden gates, is *love to God*.

This, in its proper order, would come before the observance of the several duties already named. I can easily conceive of a person who said his prayers and read a chapter in the Bible, because he was alarmed by some unusual aches and pains, or because he was troubled with a hacking cough, or had raised blood from the lungs, or because he felt a strange numbness in his limbs. He would begin, in a desperate hurry, to try and make up for lost time, lest death should overtake him, and God should cast him down to hell. But there would be no true religion in such a course. This would not be "going up to Jerusalem." Our heavenly Father would have us obey Him from a higher principle than slavish fear. He has done every thing to deserve our affection, and He expects to be loved.

This is the only motive which will influence us to do right, or, at least, to *try* to do it, always and habitually.

III. Again. If our faces are indeed turned toward Jerusalem, like travelers who have a long journey to

accomplish, we shall be most anxious to lay aside every unnecessary weight, and to overcome the corrupting influences of our besetting sins.

Worldly business, it is true, should not be given up, nor worldly interests neglected; but these must be regarded as only of secondary importance. We cannot be "*going up to Jerusalem*," if our hearts and affections are rooted in the earth. There will be aspirations after something higher, something better, if our steps are turned toward the Delectable Mountains. A person who has any thing beyond an indefinite, shadowy notion that there is such a place as Heaven, will be laying up treasure above, by gladly doing acts of kindness and mercy upon earth.

Let no one be discouraged by reason of past transgressions. Hear the blessed promise of God to those who repent and turn to Him. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah i. 18. After all that we may say about the use of *means*, in order to help us onward toward Heaven, it is not in these things themselves, but to the grace of God, through Christ, conveyed to us by these channels, that we must look for pardon and sanctification.

It is only because we have a Mediator and Advocate with God, even Jesus Christ the Righteous, that any of us can hope for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness in Heaven.

Every one here to-day knows whether or not he is traveling toward that better world. If there has been any doubt before, the evidences to which I have just referred will settle the question beyond dispute.

We cannot be "going up to Jerusalem," without being sensible that our course is turned thitherward. If interest or pleasure lead us to any particular spot upon earth, we are willing to put ourselves to some inconvenience to get there, even though we are obliged to plod along on foot. We think of such a place often when, very likely, we are occupied by business elsewhere.

So with those who are seeking "a better country" in heaven, and who make the pearl of great price the chief object of pursuit.

Jerusalem! thou blessed place!
How full of glory, full of grace!
Far, far above the starry skies
Thy golden battlements arise.

Jerusalem! where parents stand,
And blessed children, hand in hand,
And see their mighty Saviour's face,
And laud and magnify His grace.

Jerusalem! thou seat of love!
Thou city of our God above!
May I behold Thy glory rise,
Thy golden lustre fill the skies.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem!" But why this

loitering by the way? Why have we stopped our march, and assembled in God's house? Why do we kneel around His altar here to-day?

To refresh and strengthen our fainting souls with the spiritual food which a Saviour's love has so bountifully prepared; to fit ourselves for a new and more vigorous start in the way which leadeth unto everlasting life.

Before us lie dreariness, and difficulties, and dangers, and death; but afar off, in the distance, rise the glittering walls and lofty battlements of the celestial city—the glorious manifestation of God's goodness, for which the earnest expectation of the whole creation longs and waits.

Let the world and the devil offer what attractions they please, *our* purpose is firmly fixed. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." My friends, will not you go with us?

SERMON XXV.

DEGREES OF BLISS IN HEAVEN.

Ye which have followed Me; in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.—ST. MATT. xix. 28, 29.

It is natural for us to be anxious to learn all we can about heaven. The light which the Bible throws upon the subject often seems dim and unsatisfactory. This, in a great measure, is owing to ourselves. We determine in our own minds that a matter so full of interest, must certainly be found in the most prominent places. Hence, we hurry over the less striking passages, in which, as it often happens, the clearest intimations are given. The text is a case in point.

A rich young man, whose life from childhood had been marked by great propriety and self-control, felt half persuaded to become a follower of Jesus. But when the terms of enlistment were made known, he instantly drew back. The sacrifices required were more than he was willing to undergo.

The Apostles, who were listening to the conversation, and who had given up their all for Christ, very naturally asked what return they might expect for so strong a proof of their faith. The answer was the encouraging promise announced as the text: "Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Our Lord holds out to the disciples an ample *compensation* for all their sacrifices and sufferings in the cause of the Gospel. Their reward was to be both present and future. In St. Mark's gospel the expression is: "Ye shall receive a hundred fold, *now, in this time*," chap. x. 30. Or as St. Luke has it, he "shall receive *manifold more in this present time*, and in the world to come, life everlasting." Chap. xviii. 30.

It is somewhat remarkable that the sense of the text is lost to a very large proportion of the readers of the Bible; not from any fault in the translation, but from the mere misplacing of a comma. The point should be after "Me," instead of being after regeneration. By the term *regeneration* here, baptism is not meant. It refers to the *resurrection at the last day*, which will be the second generation of men to life.

The righteous are said at the resurrection to become the children of God, because they are raised by Him to a life of immortality; or as our Lord Himself expresses it, "They are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." St. Matt. xx. 36.

The text, then, is perfectly plain. "Ye which have followed Me, shall, as a reward in the great day of the resurrection of the dead and of forming the new and eternal order of things, the day of judgment, the regeneration, be signally honored and blessed."

A most absurd notion commonly prevails that all who shall be received into heaven will share alike in its rewards. It is not too much to say that such an idea makes the Almighty unjust. If one person spends his whole life in steady, uniform, conscientious effort to serve and please God, and another gives up the freshness of youth and the vigor of manhood to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and only repents in time to save his soul, would it be right that both should enter upon the same measure of enjoyment?

The bare statement of the proposition shows its absurdity. As well might the raw recruits expect the ample pay and the bounty lands of the old and victorious veterans.

Besides, the whole tenor of Scripture is opposed to it. Not a single passage can be fairly quoted in its support. "He that soweth little" in this world, "shall reap little" in the world to come. 2 Cor. ix. 6 compare with Gal. vi. 8. Our Saviour speaks of a "righteous

man's reward," and a "prophet's reward," of sitting on His right and left hand, St. Matt. x. 41, as distinct degrees of blessedness. St. Paul tells us that as "one star differeth from another star in glory," so also will it be in "the resurrection of the dead," and in the rewards of the new creation. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

Our Lord teaches His followers to secure to themselves a pre-eminence and glory in heaven, by condescending to perform lowly offices upon earth. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." St. Matt. xx. 26, 27. St. Jerome justly remarks upon this: "If we be equal in heaven, we in vain humble ourselves here that we may be greater there."

"In my Father's house there are many mansions," St. John xiv. 2; *i. e.*, some higher, some lower, according to our growth in grace and our meetness for heaven. "How are there many mansions with the Father," Tertullian significantly asks, "but according to the variety of merits or the good works of men?"

But I need not tax your patience by looking after other passages, while the text itself settles the whole question. By the promise made to the Apostles that they should "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," we are to understand that some singular and surpassing blessedness was in store for them. They became princes and rulers in "the

kingdom of God." Though they had broken away from every earthly tie, they had still a reward below. "The whole Church was their ghostly family; they had sons, and brethren, and sisters in all lands. All the whole earth was their home. . . . When most likened in suffering to the Passion of their Lord, there was, ever deep and full, a river of holy calm making glad the city of God. . . . Never any man forsook any thing for his Master's sake, but even in this life he hath a fulfillment of the promise in some unlooked-for compensation; not it may be, alike in kind, but full of as deep a joy."

The highest rewards of heaven can only be gained by a life of sacrifice and self-denial. Very many Christian people know nothing of such a life. It costs them no time, nor money, nor pleasure, to be followers of Jesus. They should feel the weight of the Cross. They should be sensible from something which they have given up, something which they suffer, that it is no easy thing to follow in His steps. We cannot sit with folded hands, and be saved without effort. It is "*by patient continuance in well doing*" that we must "seek for glory, and honor, and immortality." Romans ii. 7.

There will be no glittering crowns in heaven for any who have not thus toiled and endured on earth.

It is something to make us reflect very seriously when we find that religion and our worldly interests always harmonize together when the doing of good

actions and the leaving undone of bad ones, is sure to lead to our present advantage.

If the fear of reproach, the hope of patronage, the love of applause, the desire to conform to general notions of propriety, did not influence you to be Christians, would you have ever made the effort? Leave out of view the dread of coming wrath, would it have entered your minds even to put on the *semblance* of godliness? Has a real, honest, zealous wish for the glory of God and the spread of His kingdom, anything to do with your conformity to His will?

Where are the persons in these days of self-indulgence and apathy, who, in any sense, can be said to have "forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands," for Christ's sake, and thus become entitled to the "hundred-fold" blessings which He has promised in His kingdom?

Now and then we read of a devoted missionary or a pious layman, who has given up worldly comforts, and devoted his whole time and energies to the Church. But oh, how seldom! We occasionally hear of pious females who wait and watch about the bed of sickness, and look after the poor, and instruct the young, all for the glory of God, seeking no present advantage, and having "respect unto the recompense of the reward."

But such examples are so rare, that the newspapers

speak of them as something strange, and even Christians hold up their hands in amazement.

I do not doubt that people may be very good who make no sacrifices so great as these. They will all be "rewarded according to their works." But you must deny the truth of our blessed Saviour's words, if you hesitate to allow that the classes of persons just described will enjoy more present satisfaction, more peace of mind, more support under trials, more confidence in death, more blessedness in heaven, than those who have shown less faith in God, by denying themselves less.

If people will make religion an easy thing, they must not expect rewards. If it saves them from hell, if it brings them within the outer courts of paradise, if it enables them to catch faint and far-off echoes of the angel's song, and imperfect glimpses of heavenly glory, they will have the greater reason to bless and magnify the goodness of Him who has redeemed them by His blood.

I know that some persuade themselves that if they had lived when the Saviour and the Apostles tarried upon earth, they could have left home and kindred without a sigh, and become devoted children of the kingdom. But their daily conduct shows how mistaken they are in regard to themselves. There are quite as many opportunities for making sacrifices now. Jesus is no further off. He is present in His Church. It is His voice which speaks in all her ordinances.

When the call upon persons to be confirmed is heard, bidding them, in the name of God, to "come out and be separate" from the world, and be received as the "sons and daughters" of the Lord Almighty, (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18,) it is an occasion when great self-denial may be shown. Courage must be summoned, ridicule must be braved, bad habits must be given up, vows of obedience must be taken, and oftentimes, literally and truly, "brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children," must be left, in order that we may follow Christ.

But suppose that your friends all go with you in uniting with the Church, that your standing in society places you above the fear of ridicule or reproach, can you make no extraordinary sacrifice for Christ? You can. The "houses" and "lands," the stock and the bonds, the rents and interest, the salaries and wages, which you count as your worldly wealth, may be so spent as to be laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come.

The more we give the more we gain; the more we suffer the more we shall afterward rejoice.

Even in "this present time" shall we learn the blessedness of thus laboring for our God. When worldly cares and disappointments teach us how uncertain are its boasted joys, when ingratitude and perverseness show the little dependence to be placed upon its friendships and professions, we may rise superior to every annoyance and every grief, if a life of

self-denial has secured for us the good-will of that Father in heaven who will love us unto the end.

Feverish dreams and frightful delirium may prey upon us in the agonies of death; a dull stupor may palsy every faculty and extinguish every hope; but some moment of consciousness will return, and then the eye of faith will look onward to that glorious rest which remaineth for the people of God. The voice of Him in whose service we have toiled, and who holds the keys of death and hell, will repeat the promise, so broad, so blessed, so full of comfort:—
“Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

SERMON XXVII.

RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS IN ANOTHER WORLD.

I shall go to him.—2 SAMUEL xii., *part of 28d verse.*

SHALL we be united again in heaven to the friends whom we have loved on earth?

This is a question of great interest to us all. It is true, our salvation does not depend upon our being able to answer it; but still we would like to be satisfied upon the point.

We might bring the subject to the bar of reason, and examine the probabilities on both sides of the question. And what would *reason* say? Why, you may appeal to the common sense of people of every name and nation, and almost with one voice they would answer, that they *do* confidently expect to know and love those hereafter whom they have known and loved here. It is in strictest harmony with the "dictates of reason to believe," says Dr. Paley, "that the same great God who brings men to life again, will bring those together whom death has separated. When His power is at work in this great dispensation, it is very probable that this should be a part of His gracious design."

This fond hope—nay, I may better call it, this *assured anticipation*, has again and again dried the mourner's tears, and kindled a cheering light amidst the gloominess of the grave.

"Not lost, but gone before," is the comfort which reason whispers to the sad and sorrowing heart.

We may very naturally suppose that one part of our enjoyment in heaven, will consist in conversing with our friends upon the various temptations and trials through which we passed, in journeying toward the land of everlasting life; of the fierce conflicts with the enemy in the "good fight of faith"; and of marvelous deliverances and triumphs through the might of the "great Captain of our salvation."

No one who thinks of heaven with any degree of interest, but regards it as a place where he shall see God and our Saviour—a place where he shall recognize Abraham, and Moses, and the Apostles Peter, and Paul, and John, and the martyrs Stephen, and Polycarp, and Ignatius—a place where he shall meet again with his father, and mother, and sisters, and brothers, and friends.

Now, would such an expectation have been so universally implanted in the human mind, if those who cherish it were all doomed to disappointment at the last?

Reason answers No; and she does it loudly, and with strong confidence that she is right.

Let us turn now to the Scriptures, and see whether

there be any warrant in them for the views just presented.

Allow me to say, however, that, since the Bible, as a general rule, affords but little light upon matters of mere curiosity, we should not be too sanguine as to the amount of evidence which will be afforded upon this subject.

I do not pretend that the doctrine of the recognition of friends in heaven is plainly and positively revealed, as great and fundamental doctrines are.

In a question of this kind, upon which the hopes and expectations of nearly all people are in most perfect agreement, the very silence of the Scriptures might be regarded as an admission that such hopes and expectations are well founded.

But if I cannot point you to any special revelation on the subject, I can at least produce clear and undoubted intimations, which amount to the same thing in the end.

Have you ever thought why it was that the worthies of old time were so particular about the place of their burial, always insisting, with a pertinacity for which there must have been some good reason, that their bones might be laid near the graves of their kindred?

Was it not that they not only expected to rise again from the dead, but that they anticipated a happy reunion with departed friends?

What mattered it to Jacob, whether his body should

be buried in the desert, or sunk in the deep, if he had not believed that, upon the resurrection morn, he should recognize his parents, and the wife of his bosom, as they came forth from the cave which Abraham had bought for "a burying place," in the "land of Canaan"? Gen. xlix. 29, 30.

Why did Joseph, on his dying bed, oblige his brethren to promise that, when God should visit His people, and lead them forth from Egypt, his bones should be carried away, and laid near the home of his fathers? Gen. l. 25.

Does this afford no ground of probability for the opinion that he desired to rest with those in the grave whom he expected to know again in heaven?

But I can produce yet stronger intimations than these.

The language of King David, in my text, is a case in point. He had lost a favorite child. While life lasted, he fasted and prayed that his darling might be spared to him. But when hope was buried in the tomb, the doating father dried his tears, and soothed the sadness of his heart, by the assured anticipation of reunion with his son: "Wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

But you may say, that I have given nothing more than the crude notions of the early Jews, and that you would choose rather to seek for light from the Gospel.

To the New Testament, therefore, let us go. In the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, to which our Saviour refers in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the soul of Dives is represented as recognizing the soul of the beggar, and as remembering the things which had happened upon earth. St. Luke xix.

It is plain, also, from the words of Jesus to the penitent thief, that the soul of the poor pardoned one would *know* the Saviour when they entered upon the rest of Paradise. St. Luke xxiii. 43.

When Moses and Elias conversed with our Saviour upon the Mount of Transfiguration, the three favored disciples knew these ancient worthies, and St. Peter called them by name. St. Matthew xvii. 2, &c.; St. Mark ix.

Is it not fair to suppose that, if Moses and Elias were thus readily known in their short and unlooked-for visit to earth, we shall be able, without difficulty, to recognize the faithful when exalted to Heaven?

Nay, further. Our Lord says expressly that there are those who shall one day "*see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God*" (St. Luke xiii. 28); and others who shall "*come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob*" (St. Matt. viii. 11), enjoying the rest, and sharing in the rewards of the redeemed.

If there be no such thing as a recognition of friends

hereafter, what does St. Paul mean when, contrasting the limited knowledge of our present state with the unclouded vision to be enjoyed hereafter, he declares, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known"? 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

And again. There can be no question that he fully expected a personal knowledge hereafter of those over whom he had exercised the high and holy office of a Bishop in the Church. When writing to the Colossians, he declares how anxious he is to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." 1 Col. xxvii. 9. And to the Thessalonians he says: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

The undoubted meaning of these passages is—and they can have no other—that St. Paul hoped, at the general judgment, to present unto the Saviour, as the seals of his ministry, the persons whom his warnings and instructions had led into the way of truth. To be able to do this, he must of necessity know his converts in their new and glorified state. If this be true—and I see no reason to doubt it—why may not *we*, and all Christians, know our friends at the last day, and spend a happy eternity with them?

I believe that in Heaven each pastor will know the people of his charge, and that then and there they will

thank him, with unfeigned hearts, for his work of faith and labor of love.

I believe that children will be restored to their parents, and parents to their children, and that the various friendly relations of life will be renewed.

“The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.”

True friendship sweetens the bitterest cup which we are called upon here to drink. Its fragrant memory lives and lingers after death. Surely such friendship, though thus interrupted for a time, will revive again in the fairer regions beyond the grave.

“It is yet but a little while, and we shall be delivered from the burden and the conflict; and, with all those who have gone before us in the righteous struggle, enjoy the deep raptures of a Mediator’s presence. Then, reunited to the friends with whom we took sweet counsel upon earth, we shall call to mind the tug and din of the war, only that, with a more bounding throb, and a richer song, we may feel and celebrate the wonders of redemption.”

Upon reviewing the whole subject, must we settle down into the opinion that—although it is certainly a curious and an interesting one—after all, it is of no great practical importance? I think this would be a very wrong conclusion.

Does it not rather have a tendency to strengthen the tender ties which bind us together upon earth, to

believe that this is only the beginning of affection and love which will outlast the shining stars?

Has no one been irresistibly drawn back from sin, and encouraged to do right, because he longs to meet a father, or mother, or wife, or sister, or child, in heaven? The experience of many would prove this to be true.

Often and again has the fond parent struggled onward in the way of duty, animated by the hope of meeting again the smiling infant, or the engaging child, which the Saviour has carried home to His bosom.

But remember, also, that there are those in Paradise who will be expecting *you*! When the last day dawns, and the angelic messengers bear you away on wings of love from the burning world, a countless throng will stand about the throne; and among them glistening eyes of the loved and the lost will be looking out, to recognize a parent, or husband, or friend among those who come.

Oh! may no disappointed child, no afflicted wife, no devoted friend, say, in bitterness of soul, "*My father—my husband, the companion of my youth—is not here!*"

THE END.

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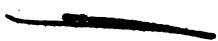
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